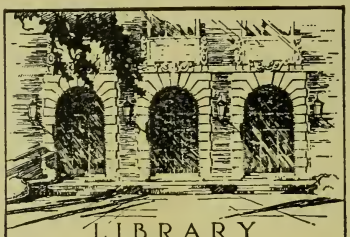

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FRONTISPIECE Vol 1

Designed & Etched by W.H. Brooke F.S.A.

Peter Connell carrying the intoxicated Footman.

Page

Dublin Published by W.F. Wel[illegible] 1824

TRAITS AND STORIES

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THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

Carleton, William, 1794-1869

SECOND SERIES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN:
WILLIAM FREDERICK WAKEMAN.
SOLD IN LONDON,
BY W. SIMPKIN AND R. MARSHALL, AND BY R. GROOMBRIDGE,
6, PANYER-ALLEY, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1834.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is to be wished that Prefaces were abolished; there is something peculiarly Irish in them. An Author writes a book, and proceeds from story to story, or from incident to incident, as the case may be, and imagines, when he has concluded, that the work is finished. He never was more mistaken in his life: for, at the moment he fancies the labour over, comes the bookseller to remind him of the Preface. He is accordingly compelled to resume his pen, and end his book at the beginning.

With respect to the contents of this *Second* Series, the Author has only to observe, that the volumes constituting the *First Series* had an excellent sale, considering that they were of Irish manufacture. They are now in a third edition, and much of their success may probably be ascribed to the fact of their never having been puffed; for no man excites more notice than he who runs counter to the fashion.

It was, therefore, the brisk sale of the First Series, joined to a vacancy in the Author's purse, which he felt rather anxious to have filled up, that induced him to bring out the present work.

He hopes it may succeed as well as the other; but that it may succeed better, is a wish due to the worthy and liberal Publisher who brings it out.

The Author was pressed by many of his friends to dedicate this book to some Great Man; but as he had only a month's notice to look about him, he found himself rather at a loss for time to discover any one worthy of that character —except Bartalimeo, the Castle Porter, who stands six feet six inches, German measure. The Public is the only Great Man at present, whose patronage is worth any thing to a writer.

To the Reviewers, Periodicals, and the press in general, the Author begs to return his warmest and most grateful acknowledgments for their favourable notices of his first effort. It was impossible to bestow greater praise on any book of the kind than it received at their hands, yet he hopes they will praise this still more highly.

God be with the present times! They are not like those in which an Author was almost compelled to dedicate his book to some Lord, whose name accompanied it as a kind of safe conduct to oblivion. The world, however, is a huge paradox. One would think, for instance, that works of fiction should have flourished in the dedicating age; yet such was not the fact. Fiction was wasted on the patron to such excess in the beginning of the book, that the Author had little left for the work itself. It is the avoid-

ing of this error that has raised imaginative writing to such perfection in the present day.

This Preface, like every other human work, except the improvement of Ireland, must come to a close. It was written on compulsion: it was to have been serious—it was to have given a touching dissertation upon Irish character—it was to have been elaborate, philosophical, and what not—all within the compass of four pages!

In vain has the Author tried condensation—in vain also has he attempted epigrammatic pathos, in order to save space. The epigrams were sorrowful enough, he admits; but as the pity they were calculated to excite was more likely to be bestowed on himself than on his country, he thought it more patriotic to decline being felt for in that light, so long as his country was a greater object of compassion than himself.

The reader will be pleased to observe, that the notes which ought to have appeared in the first volume, are, in consequence of its bulk, to be found in the last.* Let him not smile at this. It is an Irish work, and so far like its country, where scarcely any thing is to be found in its proper place. The Author's advice was, to have had them printed in a separate pamphlet, in which shape they might have accompanied the book like a poor Curate after a fat Vicar, always ready to clear up what the dulness of his superior leaves in obscurity.

* This has been altered in the present edition.

The Author ought perhaps to mention here, that when this work was nearly ready for publication, a calamitous fire reduced the printer's establishment to ashes. The "Traits and Stories" unhappily shared the same fate: the first edition went off brilliantly in the course of one night. Had the book appeared as it was then printed, it would have rivalled any thing coming from the first houses of London. It was again put through the press in a hurry, and under circumstances highly disadvantageous; and yet its typographical execution is certainly creditable to the country.

In adverting to this subject it may be prudent to state, that the last scene between DENIS O'SHAUGHNESSY and SUSAN is not now such as it was originally. The first contained pathos enough to deluge a whole boarding-school; but, alas! the first pathos was burned in the conflagration, and unhappily the Author is not in the habit of being twice pathetic on the same subject

Reader, farewell for a while. A long preface is like a long grace: if the dinner be good, it is doubly tedious; and if it be bad, it adds to our disappointment, by sharpening the appetite for what is not to be had. Now fall to, and may you relish what is before you. *Kead millia failthah!*

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THERE is little more to be expressed in *this* preface than the simple fact that the Author has nothing to say. To say this in a few words is a task exceedingly difficult, as any man acquainted with the frequent attempts to do it may testify. Let not my readers suppose, however, that because this preface is short, it therefore contains but little. This would be a mistake. It contains my deeply felt gratitude to the public, and to the periodical literature of the day, including the daily and weekly press; and the man who says that this is little, had better carry his information to any other person rather than myself. I have only to add, that this edition is improved and corrected, and that it is, moreover, enriched by the exquisite and unrivalled illustrations of my friend, Mr. Brooke, who, in the delineation

of Irish life stands unapproachable and unapproached. I have no hesitation in declaring that Cruikshank is not greater in English drollery than Brooke is in that of the Green Isle. His incomparable humour and felicity of expression, joined to his admirable conception of character. have far surpassed my own creations, although I considered myself not inferior to any man in knowledge of Irish life and manners. This certainly is due to the man to whose genius I owe so much. Having thus discharged my obligations to the press, the public, and my talented fellow-labourer in the Irish field, I beg, with my most sincere and lively sense of their kindness, to bid them farewell until we meet again.

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THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

Frank M'Kenna was a snug farmer, frugal and industrious in his habits, and, what is rare amongst most men of his class, addicted to neither drink nor quarrelling. He lived at the skirt of a mountain, which ran up in long successive undulations, until it ended in a dark, abrupt peak, very perpendicular on one side, and always, except on a bright day, capped with clouds. Before his door lay a hard plain, covered only with a kind of bent, and studded with round grey rocks, protruding somewhat above its surface. Through this plain, over a craggy channel, ran a mountain torrent, that issued to the right of M'Kenna's house, from a rocky and precipitous valley which twisted itself round the base of the mountain until it reached the perpendicular side, where the peak actually overhung it. On looking either from the bottom of the valley or the top of the peak, the depth appeared immense; and, on a summer's day, when the black-thorns and other hardy shrubs that in some places clothed its rocky sides were green, to view the river sparkling below you in the sun, as it flung itself over two or three cataracts of great depth and boldness, filled the mind with those undefinable sensations of pleasure inseparable from a contempla-

tion of the sublimities of nature. Nor did it possess less interest when beheld in the winter storm. Well do we remember, though then ignorant of our own motives, when we have, in the turmoil of the elements, climbed its steep, shaggy sides, disappearing like a speck, or something not of earth, among the dark clouds that rolled over its summit, for no other purpose than to stand upon its brow, and look down on the red torrent, dashing with impetuosity from crag to crag, whilst the winds roared, and the clouds flew in dark columns around us, giving to the natural wildness of the place an air of wilder desolation.—Beyond this glen the mountains stretched away for eight or ten miles in swelling masses, between which lay many extensive sweeps, well sheltered and abundantly stocked with game, particularly with hares and grouse. M'Kenna's house stood, as I said, at the foot of this mountain, just where the yellow surface of the plain began to darken into the deeper hues of the heath; to the left lay a considerable tract of stony land in a state of cultivation; and beyond the river, exactly opposite the house, rose a long line of hills, studded with houses, and in summer diversified with fallow, pasture, and corn fields, the beauty of which was heightened by the columns of smoke that slanted across the hills, as the breeze carried them through the lucid haze of the atmosphere.

M'Kenna's family consisted of himself, his wife, two daughters, and two sons. One of these was a young man addicted to drink, idle, ill-tempered, and disobedient; seldom taking a part in the labours of the family, but altogether devoted to field sports, fairs,

markets, and dances. In many parts of Ireland it is usual to play at cards for mutton, loaves, fowls, or whiskey, and he was seldom absent from such gambling parties, if held within a reasonable distance. Often had the other members of the family remonstrated with him on his idle and immoral courses; but their remonstrances only excited his bad passions, and produced, on his part, angry and exasperating language, or open determinations to abandon the family altogether and enlist. For some years he went on in this way, a hardened, ungodly profligate, spurning the voice of reproof and of conscience, and insensible to the intreaties of domestic affection, or the commands of parental authority. Such was his state of mind and mode of life when our story opens.

At the time in which the incidents contained in this sketch took place, the peasantry of Ireland, being less encumbered with heavy rents, and more buoyant in spirits than the decay of national prosperity has of late permitted them to be, indulged more frequently, and to a greater stretch, in those rural sports and festivities so suitable to their natural love of humour and amusement. Dances, wakes, and weddings, were then held according to the most extravagant forms of ancient usage; the people were easier in their circumstances, and consequently indulged in them with lighter hearts, and a stronger relish for enjoyment. When any of the great festivals of their religion approached, the popular mind, unrepressed by poverty and national dissention, gradually elevated itself to a species of wild and reckless mirth, productive of incidents irresistibly ludicrous, and remarkably charac-

teristic of Irish manners. It is not, however, to be expected, that a people whose love of fighting is so innate a principle in their disposition, should celebrate these festive seasons without an occasional crime, which threw its deep shadow over the mirthful character of their customs. Many such occurred; but they were looked upon then with a degree of horror and detestation of which we can form but a very inadequate idea at present.

It was upon the advent of one of those festivals—Christmas—that the family of M'Kenna, like every other family in the neighbourhood, were making preparations to celebrate it with the usual hilarity. They cleared out their barn in order to have a dance on Christmas eve, and for this purpose, the two sons and the servant man wrought with that kind of industry produced by the cheerful prospect of some happy event. For a week or fortnight before the evening on which the dance was appointed to be held, due notice of it had been given to the neighbours, and, of course, there was no doubt but that it would be numerously attended.

Christmas eve, as the day preceding Christmas is called, has been always a day of great preparation and bustle. Indeed the whole week previous to it is also remarkable, as exhibiting the importance attached by the people to those occasions on which they can give a loose to their love of fun and frolic. The farmhouse undergoes a thorough cleansing. Father and sons are, or rather used to be, all engaged in repairing the out-houses, patching them with thatch where it was wanted, mending mangers, paving stable floors,

fixing cow-stakes, making boraghs,* removing nuisances, and cleaning streets.

On the other hand, the mother, daughters, and maids, were also engaged in their several departments; the latter scouring the furniture with sand; the mother making culinary preparations, baking bread, killing fowls, or salting meat; whilst the daughters were unusually intent upon the decoration of their own dress, and the making up of the family linen. All, however, was performed with an air of gaiety and pleasure; the ivy and holly were disposed about the dressers and collar beams with great glee; the chimneys were swept amidst songs and laughter; many bad voices, and some good ones, were put in requisition; whilst several who had never been known to chaunt a stave, alarmed the listeners by the grotesque and incomprehensible nature of their melody. Those who were inclined to devotion—and there is no lack of it in Ireland—took to carols and hymns, which they sang, for want of better airs, to tunes highly comic. We have ourselves often heard the Doxology sung in Irish verse, to the facetious air of "Paudeen O'Rafferty;" and other hymns to the tune of "Peas upon a Trencher," and "Cruskeen Lawn." Sometimes, on the contrary, many of them, from the very fulness of jollity, would become pathetic, and indulge in those touching old airs of their country, which may be truly called songs of sorrow, from the exquisite and simple pathos with which they abound. This, though it may seem anomalous, is but natural; for there is nothing so apt to recall to the heart those

* The rope with which a cow is tied in the cow-house.

friends, whether absent or dead, with whom it has been connected, as a stated festival. Affection is then awakened, and summons to the hearth where it presides those on whose faces it loves to look; if they be living, it places them in the circle of happiness which surrounds it; and if they be removed for ever from such scenes, their memory, which, amidst the din of ordinary life, has almost passed away, is now restored, and their loss felt as if it had been only just then sustained.

For this reason, at such times, it is not at all unusual to see the elders of Irish families touched by pathos as well as humour. The Irish are a people whose affections are as strong as their imaginations are vivid; and, in illustration of this, we may add, that many a time have we seen them raised to mirth and melted into tears almost at the same time, by a song of the most comic character. The mirth, however, was for the song, and the sorrow for the memory of some beloved relation who had been remarkable for singing it, or with whom it had been a favourite.

We do not affirm that in the family of the M'Kennas there were, upon the occasion which we are describing, any tears shed. The enjoyments of the season, and the humours of the expected dance, both combined to give them a more than usual degree of mirth and frolic. At an early hour all that was necessary for the due celebration of that night and the succeeding day, had been arranged and completed. The whiskey had been laid in, the Christmas candles bought, the barn cleared out, the seats laid; in short, every thing in its place, and a place for every thing. About one

o'clock, however, the young members of the family began to betray some symptoms of uneasiness; nor was M'Kenna himself, though the *farithee*, or man of the house, altogether so exempt from what they felt, as might, if the cause of it were known to our readers, be expected from a man of his years and experience.

From time to time one of the girls tripped out as far as the stile before the door, where she stood looking in a particular direction, until her sight was fatigued.

"Och, och," her mother exclaimed during her absence, "but that colleen's sick about Barny!—musha, but it would be the beautiful joke, all out, if he'd disappoint the whole of yees. Faix, it wouldn't be unlike the same man, to go to wherever he can make most money; and sure small blame to him for that; what's one place to him more than another?"

"Hut," M'Kenna replied, rising, however, to go out himself, "the girsha's makin' a *bauliore** of herself."

"An' where's yourself slippin' out to?" rejoined his wife, with a wink of shrewd humour at the rest, "I say, Frank, are *you* goin' to look for him too? Mavrone, but that's sinsible! Why, thin, you snakin' ould rogue, is that the way wid you? Throth I have often hard it said, that 'one fool makes many;' but sure enough, 'an ould fool's worse nor any.' Come in here this minute, I say—walk back—you to have your horn up!—Faix, indeed!"

"Why, I am only goin' to get the small phaties

* A laughing-stock.

boiled for the pigs, poor crathurs, for their Christmas dinner. Sure we oughtn't to neglect thim no more nor ourselves, the crathurs, that can't spake their wants, except by gruntin'."

"Saints above!—the Lord forgive me for bringin' down *their* names upon a Christmas eve!—but its beside himself the man is!—an' him knows that the phaties wor boiled an' made up in balls for them arly this mornin'!"

In the mean time, the wife's good-natured attack upon her husband produced considerable mirth in the family. In consequence of what she said, he hesitated; but ultimately was proceeding towards the door, when the daughter returned, her brow flushed, and her eye sparkling with mirth and delight.

"Ha!" said the father, with a complacent smile, "all's right, Peggy; you seen him, a lanna. The music's in your eye, a cushla; an' the feet of you can't keep themselves off o' the ground; an' all bekase you seen Barny *Dhal* pokin' acrass the fields, wid his head up, an' his skirt stickin' out behind him wid Granua Waile."*

The father had conjectured properly, for the joy which animated the girl's countenance could not be misunderstood.

"Barny's comin'," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with great glee, "an' our Frank wid him; they're at the river, and Frank has him on his back, and Granua Waile undher his arm! Come out, come out! You'll die for good, lookin' at them staggerin' acrass. I knew he'd come! I knew it! God be

* His fiddle.

good to thim that invinted Christmas; it's a brave time, faix!"

In a moment the inmates were grouped before the door, all anxious to catch a glimpse of Barny and Granua Waile.

"Faix ay! Sure enough. Sarra doubt of it! Whethen, I'd never mistrust Barny!" might be heard in distinct exclamations from each.

"Faith he's a Trojan," said the *farithee*, "an' must get lashins of the best we have. Come in, childher, an' red the hob for him.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year;
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
An' the divil a mouth
Shall be friends wid drouth,
While I have whiskey, ale, or beer.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Wid han' in han',
An' can to can,
Then Hi for the whiskey, ale, an' beer.

Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
Then the high an' the low
Shall shake their toe,
When prim'd wid whiskey, ale, an' beer.

For all that, the sorra fig I care for either ale or beer, barrin' in regard of mere drouth; give me the whiskey. Eh, Alley—won't we have a jorum any how?"

"Why, thin," replied the wife, "the devil be from me (the crass about us for namin' him) but you're

a greater *Brinoge* than some of your childher! I suppose it's *your* capers Frank has in him. Will you behave yourself, you ould slingpoke? Behave, I say, an' let me go. Childher, will you help me to flake this man out o' the place? Look at him, here, caperin' an' crackin' his fingers afore me, an' pullin' me out to dance!"

"Och, och, murdher alive," exclaimed the good man, out of breath, "I seen the day, any way! An', maybe, could show a step or two yet, if I was well vexed. You can't forget ould times, Alley? Eh, you thief?"

"Musha, have sinse, man alive," replied the wife, in a tone of placid gravity, which only betrayed the pleasure she herself felt in his happiness. "Have sinse, an' the strange man comin' in, an' don't let him *see* you in sich figaries."

The observation of the good woman produced a loud laugh among them. "Arrah what are yees laughin' at?" she inquired.

"Why, mother," said one of her daughters, "how could Barny *Dhal*, a blind man, *see* any body?"

Alley herself laughed at her blunder, but wittily replied, "Faith, avourneen, maybe he can often see as nately through his ear, as you can do wid your eyes open; sure they say he can hear the grass growin'."

"For that matther," observed the *farithee*, joining in the joke, "he can see as far as any of us—while we're asleep."

The conversation was thus proceeding, when Barny *Dhal* and young Frank M'Kenna entered the kitchen.

In a moment all hands were extended to welcome

Barny: "*Millia failte ghud* Barny!" "*Cead millia failte ghud*, Barny!" "Oh, Barny, did you come at last?" "You're welcome, Barny!" "Barny, my Trojan, how is every cart-load of you?" "How is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Why thin, holy music, did you never see Barny *Dhal* afore? Clear off from about me, or, by the sweets of rosin, I'll play the devil an' brake things. 'You're welcome, Barny!'—an' 'How are you, Barny?' Why thin, piper o' Moses, don't I know I'm welcome, an' yit you must be tellin' me what every body knows! But sure I have great news for you all!"

"What is that, Barny?"

"Well, but can yees keep a sacret? Can yees, girls?"

"Faix can we, Barny, achora."

"Well, so can I—ha, ha, ha! Now are yees sarved? Come, let me to the hob."

"Here, Barny; I'll lead you, Barny."

"No, I *have* him; come, Barny, *I'll* lead you: here, achora, this is the spot—that's it. Why, Barny," said the arch girl, as she placed him in the corner, "sorra one o' the hob but knows you: it never stirs—ha, ha, ha!"

"Throth, a colleen, that tongue o' yours will delude some one afore long, if it hasn't done so already."

"But how is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Poor Granua is it? Faith, times is hard wid her often. 'Granua,' says I to her, 'what do you say, acushla? we're axed to go to two or three places today—what do you say? Do you lead, an' I'll follow:

your will is my pleasure.' 'An' where are we axed to?' says Granua, sinsible enough. 'Why,' says I, 'to Paddy Lanigan's, to Mike Hartigan's, to Jack Lynch's, an', at the heel o' the hunt, to Frank M'Kenna's, of the Mountain Bar.' 'By my song,' says she, *you* may go where you plase; for me, *I'm* off to Frank M'Kenna's, one of the dacentest men in Europe, an' his wife the same. Divil a toe I'll set a waggin' in any other place this night,' says she, 'for 'tis there we're both well thrated wid the best the house can afford. So,' says she, 'in the name of all that's musical, you're welcome to the poker an' tongs any where else: for me, I'm off to Frank's.' An' faith, sure enough, she took to her pumps; an' it was only comin' over the hill there, that young Frank an' I overtuck her: divil a lie in it."

In fact, Barny, besides being a fiddler, was a *shanahus* of the first water; could tell a story, or trace a genealogy as well as any man living, and draw the long bow in either capacity much better than he could in the practice of his more legitimate profession.

"Well, here she is, Barny, to the fore," said the aforesaid arch girl, "an' now give us a tune."

"What!" replied the *farithee*, "is it widout either aitin' or dhrinkin'? Why the girsha's beside herself! Alley, aroon, get him the linin', an' a sup to tighten his elbow."

The good woman instantly went to provide refreshments for the musician.

"Come, girls," said Barny, "will yees get me a scythe or a handsaw."

"A scythe or a handsaw! ethen what to do, Barny?"

"Why, to pare my nails, to be sure," replied Barny, with a loud laugh; "but stay—come back here—I'll make shift to do wid a pair of scissors this bout.

The paarent finds his sons,
The tutherer whips them;
The nailer makes his nails,
The fiddler clips them."

Wherever Barny came there was mirth, and a disposition to be pleased, so that his jokes always told.

"Musha, the sorra *pare* you, Barny," said one of the girls, "but there's no bein' up to you, good or bad."

"The sorra *pair* me, is it? faix, Nancy, you'll soon be paired yourself wid some one, avourneen. Do you know a sartin young man wid a nose on him runnin' to a point like the pin of a sun-dial, his knees brakin' the king's pace, strikin' one another ever since he was able to walk, an' that was about four years afther he could say his *Pather Nosther;* an' faith, whatever you may think, there's no makin' them paceable except by puttin' between them! The wrong side of his shin, too, is foremost; an' though the one-half of his two feet is all heels, he keeps the same heels for set days an' bonfire nights, an' savinly walks on his ancles. His leg, too, Nancy, is stuck in the middle of his foot, like a poker in a pickaxe; an', along wid all, ——"

"Here, Barny, thry your hand at this," said the good woman, who had not heard his ludicrous description of her fictitious son-in-law—"*eeh arran agus bee laudher*, Barny, ate bread an' be strong. I'll warrant

when you begin to play, they'll give you little time to do any thing but scrape away;—taste the dhrink first, any way, in the name o' God,"—and she filled him a glass.

"Augh, augh! faith you're the moral of a woman. Are you there, M'Kenna?—here's a sudden disholution to your family! May they be scattered wid all speed—manin' the girls—to all corners o' the parish! —ha, ha, ha! Well, *that* won't vex them, any how; an' next, here's a merry Chris'mas to us, an' many o' them! Whooh! blur-an'-age!—whooh! oh, by gorra!—that's—that's—Frank run afther my breath—I've lost it—run, you tory: oh, by gor, that's stuff as sthrong as Sampson, so it is. Arrah, what well do you dhraw that from? for, faith, 'twould be mighty convanient to live near it in a hard frost."

Barny was now silent for some time, which silence was produced by the industry he displayed in assailing the substantial refreshments before him. When he had concluded his repast he once more tasted the liquor, after which he got Granua Waile, and continued playing their favourite tunes, and amusing them with anecdotes, both true and false, until the hour drew nigh when his services were expected by the young men and maidens who had assembled to dance in the barn. Occasionally, however, they took a preliminary step, in which they were joined by a few of their neighbours. Old Frank himself felt his spirits elevated by contemplating the happiness of his children and their young associates.

"Frank," said he, to the youngest of his sons, "go down to Owen Reillaghan's, and tell him an'

his family to come up to the dance early in the evenin'. Owen's a pleasant man," he added, "and a good neighbour, but a small thought too strict in his duties. Tell him to come up, Frank, arly I say; he'll have time enough to go to the Midnight Mass afther dancin' the 'Rakes of Ballyshanny,' and 'the Baltihorum jig;' an' maybe he can't do both in style."

"Ay," said Frank, in his jeering manner, "he carries a handy heel at the dancin', and a soople tongue at the prayin'; but let him alone for bringin' the bottom of his glass and his eyebrow acquainted. But if he'd pray less——"

"Go along, *a veehonee*,* an' bring him up," replied the father: you to talk about prayin'! Them that 'ud catch you at a prayer ought to be showed for the world to wondher at: a man wid two heads an him would be a fool to him. Go along, I say, and do what you're bid."

"I'm goin'," said Frank, "I'm off: but what if he doesn't come? I'll then have my journey for nothin'."

"An' it's good payment for any journey ever you'll make, barrin' it's to the gallows," replied the father, nearly provoked at his reluctance in obeying him: "won't *you* have dancin' enough in the coorse o' the night, for *you'll* not go to the Midnight Mass, and why don't you be off wid you at wanst?"

Frank shrugged his shoulders two or three times, being loth to leave the music and dancing; but on seeing his father about to address him in sharper language, he went out with a frown on his brows, and a half-smothered imprecation bursting from his lips.

* You profligate.

He had not proceeded more than a few yards from the door, when he met Rody Teague, his father's servant, on his way to the kitchen. "Rody," said he, "isn't this a purty business? My father wantin' to send *me* down to Owen Reillaghan's; when, by the vartue o' my oath, I'd as soon go half way into hell, as to any place where his son, Mike Reillaghan, 'ud be. How will I manage, Rody?"

"Why," replied Rody, "as to meetin' wid Mike, take my advice and avoid him. And what is more, I'd give up Peggy Gartland for good. Isn't it a mane thing for you, Frank, to be hangin' afther a girl that's fonder of another than she is of yourself. By this and by that, I'd no more do it—awouh! catch me at it—I'd have spunk in me."

Frank's brow darkened as Rody spoke; instead of instantly replying, he was silent, and appeared to be debating some point in his own mind, on which he had not come to a determination.

"My father didn't hear of the fight between Mike and me?" said he interrogatively—"do you think he did, Rody?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the servant; "if he did, he wouldn't surely send *you* down; but, talking of the fight, you are known to be a stout, well-fought boy—no doubt of that—still, I say, you had no right to provoke Mike as you did, who, it's well known, could bate any two men in the parish; and so sign, you got yourself dacently trounced, about a girl that doesn't love a boue in your skin."

"He disgraced me, Rody," observed Frank—"I can't rise my head; and you know I was thought by

all the parish, as good a man as him. No, I wouldn't, this blessed Christmas Eve above us, for all that ever my name was worth, be disgraced by him as I am. But—hould, man—have patience!"

"Throth and, Frank, that's what *you* never had," said Rody; "and as to bein' disgraced, you disgraced yourself. What right had you to challenge the boy to fight, and to strike him into the bargain, bekase Peggy Gartland danced wid *him*, and wouldn't go out wid *you?* Death alive, sure that wasn't *his* fault."

Every word of reproof which proceeded from Rody's lips but strengthened Frank's rage, and added to his sense of shame; he looked first in the direction of Reillaghan's house, and immediately towards the little village in which Peggy Gartland lived.

"Rody," said he, slapping him fiercely on the shoulder, "go in—I've—I've made up my mind upon what I'll do; go in, Rody, and get your dinner; but don't be out of the way when I come back."

"And what have you made up your mind to?" inquired Rody.

"Why, be the sacred Mother o' Heaven, Rody, to —to—be friends wid Mike."

"Ay, there's sinse and rason in that," replied Rody; "and if you'd take my advice, you'd give up Peggy Gartland too."

"I'll see you when I come back, Rody; don't be from about the place."

And as he spoke, a single spring brought him over the stile at which they held the foregoing conversation.

On advancing, he found himself in one of his father's fields, under the shelter of an elder hedge.

Here he paused, and seemed still somewhat uncertain as to the direction in which he should proceed. At length he decided; the way towards Peggy Gartland's was that which he took, and as he walked rapidly, he soon found himself at the village in which she lived.

It was now a little after twilight; the night was clear, the moon being in her first quarter, and the clouds through which she appeared to struggle, were light and fleecy, but rather cold-looking; such, in short, as would seem to promise a sudden fall of snow. Frank had passed the two first cabins of the village, and was in the act of parrying the attacks of some yelping cur that assailed him, when he received a slap on the back, accompanied by a *qho manhi Dhea ghud, a Franchas, co wut thu guilh a nish, a rogora dhu?**

"Who's this?" exclaimed Frank: "eh! why, Darby More, you suilin' thief o' the world, is this you?"

"Ay, indeed; an' you're goin' down to Peggy's?" said the other, pointing significantly towards Peggy Gartland's house. "Well, man, what's the harm? She may get worse, that is, hopin' still that you'll mend your manners, a bouchal: but isn't your nose out o' joint there, Frank darlin'?"

"No sich thing at all, Darby," replied Frank, gulping down his indignation, which rose afresh on hearing that the terms on which he stood with Peggy were so notorious.

"Throth but it is," said Darby; "an' to tell the

* God save you, Frank! Where are you going now, you black rogue?

blessed thruth, I'm not sarry that it's out o' joint; for when I tould you to lave the case in *my* hands, along wid a small thrifle o' silver that didn't signify much to you—whoo! not at all; you'd rather play it at cards, or dhrink it, or spind it wid no good. Out o' joint! musha, if ever a man's nose was to be pitied and yours is: why, didn't Mike Reillaghan put it out o' joint, twiist? first in regard to Peggy, and secondly by the batin' he gave you an it."

"It's well known, Darby," replied Frank, "that 'twas by a chance blow he did it; and, you know, a chance blow might kill the divil."

"But there was no danger of Mike's gettin' the chance blow," observed the sarcastic vagrant, for such he was.

"Maybe it's afore him," replied his companion: "we'll have another thrial for it, any how; but where are you goin', Darby? Is it to the dance?"

"Me! Is it a man wid five holy ordhers an him? No, no! I might go up, maybe, as far as your father's, merely to see the family, only for the night that's in it; but I'm goin' to another frind's place to spind my Chris'mas, an', over an' above, I must go to the Midnight Mass. Frank, change your coorses, an' mend your life, an' don't be the talk o' the parish. Remimber me to the family, an' say I'll see them soon."

"How long will you stop in the neighbourhood?" inquired Frank.

"Arrah why, acushla?" replied the mendicant, softening his language.

"I might be wantin' to see you some o' these

days," said the other: "indeed, it's not unlikely, Darby; so don't go, any how, widout seein' me."

"Ah!" said Darby, "had you taken a fool's advice—but it can't be helped—the harm's done, I doubt; how-an'-ever, for the matther o' that, maybe I have as good as Peggy in my eye for you; by the same token, as the night's could, warm your tooth, avick; there's waker wather nor this in Lough Corr. Sorra sup of it ever I keep for my own use at all, barrin' when I take a touch o' configuration in my bowels, or, maybe, when I'm too long at my prayers; for, God help me, sure I'm but sthrivin', wid the help o' one thing an' another, to work out my salvation as well as I can! Your health, any how, an' a merry Chris'mas to you!—not forgettin' myself," he added, putting to his lips a large cow's horn, which he kept slung beneath his arm, like the bugle of a coach-guard, only that this was generally concealed by an outside coat, no two inches of which were of the same materials or colour. Having taken a tolerably large draught from this, which, by the way, held near two quarts, he handed it with a smack and a shrug to Frank, who immediately gave it a wipe with the skirt of his coat, and pledged his companion.

"I'll be wantin'," observed Frank, "to see you in the hollydays—faith, that stuff's to be christened yet, Darby—so don't go till we have a dish o' discoorse about somethin' I'll mintion to you. As for Peggy Gartland, I'm done wid her; she may marry ould Nick for me."

"Or you for ould Nick," said the cynic, "which would be nearly the same thing: but go an, avick,

an' never heed me; sure I must have my spake—doesn't every body know Darby More?"

"I've nothin' else to say *now*," added Frank, "and you have my authority to spread it as far as you plase. I'm done wid her: so good night, an' good cuttin'* to your horn, Darby!—You damn ould villain!" he subjoined in a low voice, when Darby had got out of his hearing; "surely it's not in yourself, but in the blessed words and things you have about you, that there is any good."

"Musha, good night, Frank, alanna," replied the other; "an' the divil sweep you, for a skamin' vagabone, that's a curse to the country, and has kep me out o' more weddins than any one I ever met wid, by your roguery in puttin' evil between frinds an' neighbours, jist whin they'd be ready for the priest to say the words over them! Good won't come of you, you profligate."

The last words were scarcely uttered by the sturdy mendicant, when he turned round to observe whether or not Frank would stop at Larry Gartland's, the father of the girl to whom he had hitherto unsuccessfully avowed his attachment.

"I'd depind on him," said he, in a soliloquy, "as soon as I'd depind upon ice of an hour's growth: an', whether or not, sure as I'm an my way to Owen Reillaghan's, the father of the dacent boy that he's strivin' to outdo, mayn't I as well watch his motions, any way?"

He accordingly proceeded along the shadowy side of the street, in order to avoid Frank's eye, should he

* Good cuttin'—May what's in it never fail.

chance to look back, and quietly dodged on until he fairly saw him enter the house.

Having satisfied himself that the object of Frank's visit to the village was in some shape connected with Peggy Gartland, the mendicant immediately retraced his steps, and at a pace more rapid than usual, strided on to Owen Reillaghan's, whither he arrived just in time to secure an excellent Christmas-eve dinner.

In Ireland, that description of mendicants which differs so strikingly from the common crowd of beggars as to constitute a distinct species, comprehends within itself as anomalous an admixture of fun and devotion, external rigour and private licentiousness, love of superstition and of good whiskey, as might naturally be supposed, without any great stretch of credulity, to belong to men thrown among a people in whom so many extremes of character and morals meet. The known beggar, who goes his own rounds, and has his own walk, always adapts his character to that of his benefactor, whose whims and peculiarities of temper he studies with industry, and generally with success. By this means, joined to a dexterity in tracing out the private history of families and individuals, he is enabled to humour the caprices, to manage the eccentricities, and to touch with a masterly hand the prejudices and particular opinions of his patrons; and this he contrives to do with great address and tact. Such was the character of Darby More, whose person, naturally large, was increased to an enormous size by the number of coats, blankets, and bags, with which he was encumbered. A large belt, buckled round his body, contained within its girth much more

of money, meal, and whiskey, than ever met the eye; his hat was exceedingly low in the crown; his legs were cased in at least three pairs of stockings; and in his hand he carried a long *cant*, spiked at the lower end, with which he slung himself over small rivers and dykes, and kept dogs at bay. He was a devotee, too, notwithstanding the whiskey horn under his arm; attended wakes, christenings, and weddings; rubbed for the *rose** and king's evil, (for the varlet insisted that he was a seventh son;) cured tooth-aches, cholics, and head-aches, by charms; but made most money by a knack which he possessed of tattooing into the naked breast the representation of Christ upon the cross. This was a secret of considerable value, for many of the superstitious people believed that by having this stained in upon them, they would escape unnatural deaths, and be almost sure of heaven.

When Darby approached Reillaghan's house, he was considering the propriety of disclosing to his son the fact of his having left his rival with Peggy Gartland. He ultimately determined that it would be proper to do so; for he was shrewd enough to suspect that the wish Frank had expressed of seeing him before he left the country, was but a *ruse* to purchase his silence touching his appearance in the village. In this, however, he was mistaken.

"God save the house!" exclaimed Darby, on entering—"God save the house, an' all that's in it! God save it to the North!" and he formed the sign of the cross in every direction to which he turned; "God save it to the South! ✠ to the Aiste! ✠ and

* A scrofulous swelling.

to the Waiste! ✢ Save it upwards! ✢ and save it downwards! ✢ Save it backwards! ✢ and save it forwards! ✢ Save it right! ✢ and save it left! ✢ Save it by night! ✢ save it by day! ✢ Save it here! ✢ save it there! ✢ Save it this way! ✢ an' save it that way! ✢ Save it atin'! ✢ ✢ ✢ an' save it drinkin'! ✢ ✢ ✢ ✢ ✢ ✢ ✢ ✢ Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin. An' now that I've blessed the place in the name of the nine Patriarchs, how are yees all, man, woman, an' child? An' a merry Christmas to yees, says Darby More!"

Darby, in the usual spirit of Irish hospitality, received a sincere welcome, was placed up near the fire, a plate filled with the best food on the table laid before him, and requested to want nothing for the asking.

"Why, Darby," said Reillaghan, "we expected you long ago: why didn't you come sooner?"

"The Lord's will be done! for ev'ry man has his troubles," replied Darby, stuffing himself in the corner like an Epicure; "an' why should a sinner like me, or the likes o' me, be widout thim? 'Twas a dhrame I had last night that kep me. They say, indeed, that dhrames go by contraries, but not always, to my own knowledge."

"An' what was the dhrame about, Darby?" inquired Reillaghan's wife.

"Why, Ma'am, about some that I see on this hearth, well, an' in good health; may they long live to be so! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!" ✢ ✢ ✢

"Blessed Virgin! Darby, sure it would be nothin' bad that's to happen? Would it, Darby?"

" Keep yourself asy on that head. I have widin my own mind the power of makin' it come out for good—I know the prayer for it. Oxis Doxis !" ✝ ✝

" God be praised for that, Darby : sure it would be a terrible business, all out, if any thing was to happen. Here's Mike that was born on Whissle Monday, of all days in the year, an', you know, they say that any child born on that day is to die an unnatural death. We named Mike after St. Michael that he might purtect him."

" Make yourself asy, I say ; don't I tell you I have the prayer to keep it back—hach ! hach !—why, there's a bit stuck in my throath, some way ! *Wurrah dheelish*, what's this ! Maybe, you could give me a sup o' dhrink—wather, or any thing to moisten the morsel I'm atin'? *Wurrah*, Ma'am dear, make haste, it's goin' agin the breath wid me !"

" Oh, the sorra taste o' wather, Darby," said Owen ; " sure this is Christmas eve, you know ; so you see, Darby, for ould acquaintance sake, an' that you may put up an odd prayer now an' thin for us, jist be thryin' this."

Darby honoured the gift by immediate acceptance.

" Well, Owen Reillaghan," said he, " you make me take more o' this stuff nor any man I know ; and particularly by rason that bein' given, wid a blessin', to the ranns, an' prayers, an' holy charms, I don't think it so good ; barrin', indeed, as Father Dannellan towld me, when the wind, by long fastin', gets into my stomach, as was the case to-day, I'm often throubled, God help me, wid a configuration in the—hugh ! ugh !—an' thin it's good for me—a little of it."

"This would make a brave powdher-horn, Darby More," observed one of Reillaghan's sons, "if it wasn't so big. What do you keep in it, Darby?"

"Why, *a villish*, nothin' indeed but a sup o' Father Donnellan's holy wather, that they say by all accounts it costs him great trouble to make, by rason that he must fast a long time, and pray by the day, afore he gets himself holy enough to consecrate it."

"It smells like whiskey, Darby," said the boy, without any intention, however, of offending him: "it smells very like *poteen*."

"Hould yer tongue, Risthard," said the elder Reillaghan; "what 'ud make the honest man have whiskey in it? Didn't he tell you what's in it?"

"The gorsoon's right enough," replied Darby: I got the horn from Barny Dalton a couple o' days agone; 'twas whiskey *he* had in it, an' it smells of it sure enough, an' will, indeed, for some time longer. Och! och! the heavens be praised, I've made a good dinner! May they never know want that gave it to me! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!" ✢ ✢ ✢

"Darby, thry this agin," said Reillaghan, offering him another bumper.

"Throth an' I will, thin, for I find myself a great dale the betther of the one I tuck. Well, here's health an' happiness to us, an' may we all meet in heaven! Risthard, hand me that horn till I be goin' out to the barn, in ordher to do somethin' for my sowl. The holy wather's a good thing to have about one."

"But the dhrame, Darby?" inquired Mrs. Reillaghan. "Won't you tell it to us?"

" Let Mike follow me to the barn," he replied, " an' I'll tell him as much of it as he ought to hear. An' now let all of yees prepare for the Midnight Mass: go there wid proper intintions, an' not to be coortin' or dhrinkin' by the way. We're all sinners, any way, an' oughtn't to neglect our sowls. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin!"

He immediately strided with the horn under his arm, towards the barn, where he knelt, and began his orisons in a tone sufficiently loud to be heard in the kitchen.

When he was gone, Mrs. Reillaghan, who, with the curiosity natural to her sex, and the superstition peculiar to her station in life, felt anxious to hear Darby's dream, urged Mike to follow him forthwith, that he might prevail on him to detail it at full length.

Darby, who knew not exactly what the dream ought to be, replied to Mike's inquiries vaguely.

" Mike," said he, " antil the proper time comes, I can't tell it; but listen: take my advice, an' slip down to Peggy Gartland's by and by. I have strong suspicions, if my dhrame is thrue, that Frank M'Kenna has a design upon her. People may be abroad this night widout bein' noticed, by rason o' the Midnight Mass; Frank has friends in Kilnaheery, up behind the mountains; an' the divil might timpt him to bring her there. Keep your eye an him, or rather an Peggy. If my dhrame's true, he was there this night."

" I thought I gave him enough on her account," said Mike. " The poor girl hasn't a day's pace in

regard of him; but, plase Goodness, I'll soon put an end to it, for I'll marry her durin' the Hollydays."

"Go, avick, an' let me finish my *Pudheran Partha:* I have to get through it before the Midnight Mass comes. Slip down, and find out what he was doin'; and when you come back, let me know."

Mike, perfectly aware of young M'Kenna's character, immediately went towards Lisdrum, for so the village where Peggy Gartland lived was called. He felt the danger to be apprehended from the interference of his rival the more acutely, inasmuch as he was not ignorant of the feuds and quarrels which the former had frequently produced between friends and neighbours, by the subtle poison of his falsehoods, which were both wanton and malicious. He therefore advanced at an unusually brisk pace, and had nearly reached the village, when he perceived in the distance a person resembling Frank approaching him at a pace nearly as rapid as his own.

"If it's Frank M'Kenna," thought he, "he must pass me, for this is his straight line home."

It appeared, however, that he had been mistaken; for he whom he had supposed to be the object of his enmity, crossed the field by a different path, and seemed to be utterly ignorant of the person whom he was about to meet, so far, at least, as a quick, free, unembarrassed step could intimate his unacquaintance with him.

The fact, however, was, that Reillaghan, had the person whom he met approached him more nearly, would have found his first suspicions correct. Frank was then on his return from Gartland's, and no

sooner perceived Reillaghan, whom he immediately recognised by his great height, than he took another path in order to avoid him. The enmity between these rivals was deep and implacable; aggravated on the one hand by a sense of unmerited injury, and on the other by personal defeat and the bitterest jealousy. For this reason neither of them wished to meet, particularly Frank M'Kenna, who not only hated, but feared his enemy.

Having succeeded in avoiding Reillaghan, the latter soon reached home; but here he found the door closed, and the family, without a single exception, in the barn, which was now nearly crowded with the youngsters of both sexes from the surrounding villages.

Frank's arrival among them gave a fresh impulse to their mirth and enjoyment. His manners were highly agreeable, and his spirits buoyant almost to levity. Notwithstanding the badness of his character in the opinion of the sober, steady, and respectable inhabitants of the parish, yet he was a favourite with the dissolute and thoughtless, and with many who had not an opportunity of seeing him except in his most favourable aspect. Whether he entertained on this occasion any latent design that might have induced him to assume a frankness of manner, and an appearance of good-humour, which he did not feel, it is difficult to determine. Be this as it may, he made himself generally agreeable, saw that every one was comfortable, suggested an improvement in the arrangement of the seats, broke several jests on Barny and Granua Waile—which, however, were returned with interest—and, in fact, acquitted himself so cre-

ditably, that his father whispered with a sigh to his mother—

"Alley, achora, wouldn't we be the happy family if that misfortunate boy of ours was to be always the thing he appears to be? God help him! the gommach, if he had sinse, and the fear o' God before him, he'd not be sich a piece o' desate to sthrangers, and sich a divil's limb wid ourselves: but he's young, an' may see his evil coorses in time, wid the help o' God."

"Musha, may God grant it!" exclaimed his mother: "a fine slip he is, if his heart 'ud only turn to the right thoughts. One can't help feelin' pride out o' him, when they see him actin' wid any kind o' rason."

The Irish dance, like every other assembly composed of Irishmen and Irishwomen, presents the spectator with those traits which enter into our conception of rollicking fun and broad humour. The very arrangements are laughable; and when joined to the eccentric strains of some blind fiddler like Barny *Dhal*, to the grotesque and caricaturish faces of the men, and the modest, but evidently arch and laughter-loving countenances of the females, they cannot fail to impress an observing mind with the obvious truth, that a nation of people so thoughtless and easily directed from the serious and useful pursuits of life to such scenes, can seldom be industrious and wealthy, nor, despite their mirth and humour, a happy people.

The barn in which they danced on this occasion was a large one. Around the walls were placed as many seats as could be spared from the neighbours' houses; these were eked out by sacks of corn laid

lengthwise, logs of round timber, old creels, iron pots with their bottoms turned up, and some of them in their usual position. On these were the youngsters seated, many of the "boys" with their sweethearts on their knees, the arms of the fair ones lovingly around their necks; and, on the contrary, many of the young women with their bachelors on their laps, their own necks also gallantly encircled by the arms of their admirers. Up in a corner sat Barny, surrounded by the seniors of the village, sawing the fiddle with indefatigable vigour, and leading the conversation with equal spirit. Indeed, his laugh was the loudest, and his joke the best, whilst, ever and anon, his music became perfectly furious—that is to say, when he rasped the fiddle with a desperate effort "to overtake the dancers," from whom, in the heat of the conversation, he had unwittingly lagged behind.

Dancing in Ireland, like every thing else connected with the amusement of the people, is frequently productive of bloodshed. It is not unusual for crack dancers from opposite parishes, or from distant parts of the same parish, to meet and dance against each other for victory. But as the judges in those cases consist of the respective friends or factions of the champions, their mode of decision may readily be conjectured. Many a battle is fought in consequence of such challenges, the result usually being that not he who has the lightest heel, but the hardest head, generally comes off the conqueror.

While the usual variety of Irish dances—the reel, jig, fling, three-part-reel, four-part-reel, rowly-powly, country-dance, *cotillion*, or cut-along, (as the peasantry

call it) and minuet, vulgarly minion, and minionet —were going forward in due rotation, our readers may be assured that those who were seated around the walls did not permit the time to pass without improving it. Many an attachment is formed at such amusements, and many a bitter jealousy is excited: the prude and coquette, the fop and rustic Lothario, stand out here as prominently to the eye of him who is acquainted with human nature, as they do in similar assemblies among the great: perhaps more so, as there is less art, and a more limited knowledge of intrigue, to conceal their natural character.

The dance in Ireland usually commences with those who sit next the door, from whence it goes round with the sun. In this manner it circulates two or three times, after which the order is generally departed from, and they dance according as they can. This neglect of the established rule is also a fertile source of discord; for when two persons rise at the same time, if there be not room for both, the right of dancing first is often decided by blows.

At the dance we are describing, however, there was no dissension; every heart appeared to be not only elated with mirth, but also free from resentment and jealousy. The din produced by the thumping of vigorous feet upon the floor, the noise of the fiddle, the chat between Barny and the little sober knot about him, together with the brisk murmur of the general conversation, and the expression of delight which sat on every countenance, had something in them elevating to the spirits.

Barny, who knew the voices, and even the mode of

dancing peculiar to almost every one in the barn, had some joke for each. When a young man brings out his sweetheart—which he frequently does in a manner irresistibly ludicrous, sometimes giving a spring from the earth, his *caubeen* set with a knowing air on one side of his head, advancing at a trot on tip-toe, catching her by the ear, leading her out to her position, which is "to face the fiddler," then ending by a snap of the fingers, and another spring, in which he brings his heel backwards in contact with his ham;—we say, when a young man brings out his sweetheart, and places her facing the fiddler, he asks her what she will dance; to which, if she has no favourite tune, she uniformly replies—"Your will is my pleasure." This usually made Barny groan aloud.

"What ails you, Barny?"

"Oh, thin, murdher alive, how little thruth's in this world! Your will's my pleasure! *Baithershin!* but, sowl, if things goes an, it won't be long so!"

"Why, Barny," the young man would exclaim, "is the ravin' fit comin' over you?"

"No, in throth, Jim; *but it's thinkin' of home I am.* Howandiver, do you go an; but, *naboklish!* What'll you have?"

"'Jig Polthouge,' Barny: but oil your wrist, a bouchal, or Katty will lave us both out o' sight in no time. Whoo! success! clear the coorse. Well done Barny! That's the go."

When the youngsters had danced for some time, the fathers and mothers of the village were called upon "to step out." This was generally the most amusing scene in the dance. No excuse is ever taken on such

occasions, for when they refuse, about a dozen young fellows place them, will they nil they, upright upon the floor, from whence neither themselves nor their wives are permitted to move until they dance. No sooner do they commence, than they are mischievously pitted against each other by two sham parties, one encouraging the wife, the other cheering on the good man; whilst the fiddler, falling in with the frolic, plays in his most furious style. The simplicity of character, and, perhaps, the lurking vanity of those who are the butts of the mirth on this occasion, frequently heighten the jest.

"Why thin, Paddy, is it strivin' to outdo me you are? Faiks, avourneen, you never seen that day, any way," the old woman would exclaim, exerting all her vigour.

"Didn't I? Sowl, I'll sober you before I lave the flure, for all that," her husband would reply.

"An' do you forget," she would rejoin, "that the M'Carthy dhrop is in me; ay, an' it's to the good still."

And the old dame would accompany the boast with a fresh attempt at agility; to which Paddy would respond by "cutting the buckle," and snapping his fingers, whilst fifty voices, amidst roars of laughter, were loud in encouraging each.

"Handle your feet, Katty, darlin'—the mettle's lavin' him!"

"Off wid the brogues, Paddy, or she'll do you. That's it; kick off the other, an' don't spare the flure."

"A thousand guineas an Katty! M'Carthy agin Gallagher for ever!—whirroo!"

Designed & Etched by W. H. Brooke F.S.A.

"Handle your feet — off wid the Brogues! Whirroo!"

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"Blur alive the flure's not benefittin' by you, Paddy. Lay an it, man!—That's it!—Bravo!—Whish!—our side agin Europe!"

"Success, Paddy! Why you could dance the Dusty Miller upon a flure paved wid drawn razures, you're so soople."

"Katty for ever! The blood's in you, Katty; you'll win the day, *a ban choir!** More power to you!"

"I'll hould a quart on Paddy. Heel an' toe, Paddy, you sinner!"

"Right an' left, Katty; hould an, his breath's goin'."

"Right an' wrong, Paddy, you spalpeen. The whisky's an you, man alive: do it dacently, an' don't let me lose the wager."

In this manner would they incite some old man, and, perhaps, his older wife, to prolonged exertion, and keep them bobbing and jigging about amidst roars of laughter, until the worthy couple could dance no longer.

During stated periods of the night, those who took the most prominent part in the dance, got a plate and hat, with which they went round the youngsters, to make collections for the fiddler. Barny reserved his best and most sarcastic jokes for these occasions; for so correct was his ear, that he felt little difficulty in detecting those whose contributions to him were such as he did not relish.

The aptitude of the Irish for enjoying humorous images was well displayed by one or two circumstances

* Decent woman.

which occurred on this night. A few of both sexes, who had come rather late, could get no other seats than the iron pots to which we have alluded. The young women were dressed in white, and their companions, who were also their admirers, exhibited in proud display, each a bran new suit, consisting of broad-cloth coat, yellow-buff vests, and corduroy small-clothes, with a bunch of broad silk ribbons standing out at each knee. They were the sons and daughters of respectable farmers, but as all distinctions here entirely ceased, they were fain to rest contented with such seats as they could get, which on this occasion consisted of the pots aforesaid. No sooner, however, had they risen to dance, than the house was convulsed with laughter, heightened by the sturdy vigour with which, unconscious of their appearance, they continued to dance. That part of the white female dresses which had come in contact with the pots, exhibited a circle like the full moon, and was black as pitch. Nor were their partners more lucky: those who sat on the mouths of the pots had the back part of their dresses streaked with dark circles, equally ludicrous. The mad mirth with which they danced, in spite of their grotesque appearance, was irresistible. This, and other incidents quite as pleasant—such as the case of a wag who purposely sank himself into one of the pots, until it stuck to him through half the dance—increased the laughter, and disposed them to peace and cordiality.

No man took a more active part in these frolics than young Frank M'Kenna. It is true, a keen eye might have noticed under his gaiety something of a

moody and dissatisfied air. As he moved about from time to time, he whispered something to above a dozen persons who were well-known in the country as his intimate companions, young fellows whose disposition and character were notoriously bad. When he communicated the whisper, a nod of assent was given by his confidants, after which it might be remarked that they moved round to the door with a caution that betrayed a fear of observation, and quietly slunk out of the barn, though Frank himself did not immediately follow them. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards, Rody came in, gave him a signal, and sat down. Frank then followed his companions, and after a few minutes Rody also disappeared. This was about ten o'clock, and the dance was proceeding with great gaiety and animation.

Frank's dread of openly offending his parents prevented him from assembling his associates in the dwelling-house; the only convenient place of rendezvous, therefore, of which they could avail themselves, was the stable. Here they met, and Frank, after uncorking a bottle of poteen, addressed them to the following effect:

"Boys, there's great excuse for me, in regard of my fight wid Mike Reillaghan; that you'll all allow. Come, boys, your healths! I can tell yees you'll find this good, the divil a doubt of it; be the same token, that I stole it from my father's Christmas dhrink; but no matther for that—I hope we'll never do worse. So, as I was sayin' you must bear me out as well as you can, when I'm brought before the Dilegates to-

morrow, for challengin' and strikin' a brother.* But, I think, you'll stand by me, boys?"

"By the tarn-o'-war, Frank, myself will fight to the knees for you."

"Faith, you may depend on *us*, Frank, or we're not to the fore."

"I know it, boys: and now for a piece of fun for this night. You see—come, Lanty, tare-an'-ounkers, drink, man alive—you see wid regard to Peggy Gartland—eh? what the hell! is that a cough?"

"One o' the horses, man—go an."

"Rody, did Darby More go into the barn before you came out of it?"

"Darby More? not he. If he did, I'd a seen him surely."

"Why, thin, I'd kiss the book I seen him goin' towards the barn, as I was comin' into the stable. Sowl, he's a made boy, that; an' if I don't mistake, he's in Mike Reillaghan's intherest. You know devil a sacret can escape him."

"Hut! the prayin' ould crathur was on his way to the Midnight Mass; he thravels slow, and, of coorse, has to set out early; besides, you know, he has Carols, and Bades, and the likes, to sell at the chapel."

"Thrue for you, Rody: why, I thought he might take it into his head to watch my motions, in regard that, as I said, I think him in Mike's intherest"

* Those connected with illegal combinations are sworn to have no private or personal quarrels, not to strike, nor provoke each other to fight. He and Mike were members of such societies.

" Nonsense, man, what the dickens 'ud bring him into the stable loft? Why, you're beside yourself?"

" Be Gor, I bleeve so, but no matther. Boys, I want yees to stand to me to-night: I'm given to know for a sartinty that Mike and Peggy will be buckled to durin' the Hollydays. Now I wish to get the girl myself; for if I don't get her, may I be ground to atoms if he will."

" Well, but how will you manage? for she's fond of him."

" Why, I'll tell you that. I was over there this evenin', and I understand that all the family is goin' to the Midnight Mass, barrin' herself. You see, while they're all gone to the 'mallet-office,'* we'll slip down wid a thrifle o' soot on our mugs, and walk off wid her to Kilnaheery, beyant the mountains, to an uncle's o' mine; an' afther that, let any man marry her who chooses to run the risk. Be the contints o' the book, Atty, if you don't dhrink I'll knock your head agin the wall, you gommoch!"

" Why, thin, by all that's beautiful, it's a good spree; an' we'll stick to you like pitch."

" Be the vartue o' my oath, you don't desarve to be in it, or you'd dhrink dacent. Why, here's another bottle, an' maybe there's more where that was. Well, let us finish what we have, or be the five crasses, I'll give up the whole business."

" Why, thin, here's success to us, any way; an' high hangin' to them that 'ud desart you in your skame this blessed an' holy night that's in it!"

* Mass.

This was re-echoed by his friends, who pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths not to abandon him in the perpetration of the outrage which they had concerted. The other bottle was immediately opened, and while it lasted, the details of the plan were explained at full length. This over, they entered the barn one by one, except Frank and Rody, who as they were determined to steal another bottle from the father's stock, did not appear among the dancers until this was accomplished.

The re-appearance of these rollicking and reckless young fellows in the dance, was hailed by all present; for their outrageous mirth was in character with the genius of the place. The dance went on with spirit; brag dancers were called upon to exhibit in hornpipes, and for this purpose a table was brought in from Frank's kitchen, on which they performed in succession, each dancer applauded by his respective party as the best in the barn.

In the mean time the night had advanced; the hour might be about half-past ten o'clock; all were in the zenith of enjoyment, when old Frank M'Kenna addressed them as follows:

"Neighbours, the dickens o' one o' me would like to break up the sport—an', in throth, harmless and dacent sport it is; but you all know that this is Christmas night, and that it's our duty to attind the Midnight Mass. Any body that likes to hear it may go, for it's near time to be home an' prepare for it; but the sorra one o' me wants to take any of yees from your sport, if you prefer it; all I say is, that I must lave yees; so God be wid yees till we meet agin!"

This short speech produced a general bustle in the barn; many of the elderly neighbours left it, and several of the young persons also. It was Christmas Eve, and the Midnight Mass had from time immemorial so strong a hold upon their prejudices and affections, that the temptation must indeed have been great which would have prevented them from attending it. When old Frank went out, about one-third of those who were present left the dance along with him, and as the hour for mass was approaching, they lost no time in preparing for it.

The Midnight Mass is, no doubt, a phrase familiar to our Irish readers; but we doubt whether those in the sister kingdoms who may honour our book with a perusal, would, without a more particular description clearly understand it.

This ceremony was performed as a commemoration not only of the night, but of the hour in which Christ was born. To connect it either with edification, or the abuse of religion would be invidious; so we overlook that, and describe it as it existed within our own memory, remarking, by the way, that though now generally discontinued, it is in some parts of Ireland still observed, or has been till within a few years ago.

The parish in which the scene of this story is laid was large, consequently the attendance of the people was proportionably great. On Christmas day a Roman Catholic priest has, or is said to have the privilege of saying *three* masses, though on every other day in the year he can celebrate but two. Each priest, then, said one at midnight, and two on the following day.

Accordingly, about twenty or thirty years ago, the performance of the Midnight Mass was looked upon as an ordinance highly important and interesting. The preparations for it were general and fervent; so much so, that not a Roman Catholic family slept till they heard it. It is true it only occurred once a year; but had any person who saw it *once* been called upon to describe it, he would say that religion could scarcely present a scene so wild and striking.

The night in question was very dark, for the moon had long disappeared, and as the inhabitants of the whole parish were to meet in one spot, it may be supposed that the difficulty was very great, of traversing, in the darkness of midnight, the space between their respective residences, and the place appointed by the priest for the celebration of mass. This difficulty they contrived to surmount. From about eleven at night till twelve or one o'clock, the parish presented a scene singularly picturesque, and, to a person unacquainted with its causes, altogether mysterious. Over the surface of the surrounding country were scattered myriads of blazing torches, all converging to one point; whilst at a distance, in the central part of the parish, which lay in a valley, might be seen a broad focus of red light, quite stationary, with which one or more of the torches that moved across the fields mingled every moment. These torches were of bog-fir, dried and split for the occasion; all persons were accordingly furnished with them, and by their blaze contrived to make way across the country with comparative ease. This Mass having been especially associated with festivity and enjoyment, was always attended by such

excessive numbers, that the ceremony was in most parishes celebrated in the open air, if the weather were at all favourable. Altogether, as we have said, the appearance of the country at this dead hour of the night, was wild and impressive. Being Christmas, every heart was up, and every pocket replenished with money, if it could at all be procured. This general elevation of spirits was no where more remarkable than in contemplating the thousands of both sexes, old and young, each furnished, as before said, with a blazing flambeau of bog-fir, all streaming down the mountain sides, along the roads, or across the fields, and settling at last into one broad sheet of fire. Many a loud laugh might then be heard ringing the night echo into reverberation; mirthful was the gabble in hard, guttural Irish; and now and then a song from some one whose potations had been rather copious, would rise on the night-breeze, to which a chorus was subjoined by a dozen voices from the neighbouring groups.

On passing the shebeen and public houses, the din of mingled voices that issued from them was highly amusing, made up, as it was, of songs, loud talk, rioting and laughter, with an occasional sound of weeping from some one who had become penitent in his drink. In the larger public houses, for in Ireland there usually are one or two of these in the immediate vicinity of each chapel, family parties were assembled, who set in to carouse both before and after mass. Those, however, who had any love affair on hands generally selected the Shebeen house, as being private, and less calculated to expose them to general observation. As

a matter of course, these jovial orgies frequently produced such disastrous consequences both to human life, and female reputation, that the intrigues between the sexes, the quarrels, and violent deaths resulting from them, ultimately occasioned the discontinuance of a ceremony which was only productive of evil. To this day it is an opinion among the peasantry in many parts of Ireland, that there is something unfortunate connected with all drinking bouts held upon Christmas Eve. Such a prejudice naturally arises from a recollection of the calamities which so frequently befell many individuals while Midnight Masses were in the habit of being celebrated.

None of Frank M'Kenna's family attended mass but himself and his wife. His children having been bound by all the rules of courtesy to do the honours of the dance, could not absent themselves from it; nor indeed, were they disposed to do so. Frank, however, and his "good woman," carried their torches, and joined the crowds which flocked to this scene of fun and devotion.

When they had arrived at the cross-roads beside which the chapel was situated, the first object that presented itself so prominently as to attract observation was Darby More, dressed out in all his paraphernalia of blanket and horn, in addition to which he held in his hand an immense torch, formed into the figure of a cross. He was seated upon a stone, surrounded by a ring of old men and women, to whom he sang and sold a variety of Christmas carols, many of them rare curiosities in their way, inasmuch as they were his own composition. A little beyond them stood

Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland, towards both of whom he cast from time to time a glance of latent humour and triumph. He did not simply confine himself to singing his carols; but, during the pauses of the melody, addressed the wondering and attentive crowd as follows:—

"Good Christians—This is the day—howandiver, it's night now, glory be to God—that the angel Lucifer appeared to Shud'orth, Meeshach, an' To-bed-we-go, in the village of Constantinople, near Jerooslem. The heavens be praised for it, 'twas a blessed an' holy *night*, an' remains so from that *day* to this—Oxis doxis glorioxis, Amin! Well; the sarra one of him but appeared to thim at the hour o' midnight, but they were asleep at the time, you see, and didn't persave him. So wid that he pulled out a horn like mine—an', by the same token, it's lucky to wear horns about one from that day to this—an' he put it to his lips, an' *tuck* a good dacent—I mane, *gave* a good dacent blast that soon roused them. 'Are yees asleep?' says he, when they awoke: 'why then, bud-an'-age!' says he, 'isn't it a burnin' shame for able stout fellows like yees to be asleep at the hour o' midnight of all hours o' the night. Tare-an-age!' says he, 'get up wid yees, you dirty spalpeens! There's St. Pathrick in Jerooslem beyant; the Pope's signin' his mittimus to Ireland, to bless it in regard that neither corn, nor barley, nor phaties will grow an the land in quensequence of a set of varmint that ates it up; an' there's not a glass o' whiskey to be had in Ireland for love or money,' says Lucifer. 'Get up wid yees,' says he, 'an' go in an' get his blessin';

sure there's not a Catholic in the counthry, barrin' Swaddlers, but's in the town by this,' says he: 'ay, an' many of the Protestants themselves, and the black-mouths, an' blue-bellies, are gone in to get a share of it. And now, says he, 'bekase you wor so heavy-headed, I ordher it from this out, that the present night is to be obsarved in the Catholic church all over the world, an' must be kep holy; an' no thrue Catholic ever will miss from this pariod an opportunity of bein' awake at midnight,' says he, 'glory be to God!' An' now, good Christians, you have an account o' the blessed carol I was singin' for yees. They're but hapuns a-piece; an' any body that has the grace to keep one o' these about them, will never meet wid sudden deaths or accidents, sich as hangin', or drownin', or bein' taken suddenly wid a configuration inwardly. I wanst knew a holy man that had a dhrame—about a friend of his, it was——Will any of yees take one?—Thank you, a colleen: my blessin', the blessin' o' the pilgrim, be an you! God bless you, Mike Reillaghan; an' I'm proud that he put it into *your* heart to buy one for the rasons you know. An' now that Father Hoolaghan's comin', any of yees that 'ill want them 'ill find me here agin when mass is over—Oxis doxis glorioxis, Amin!"

The priest at this time made his appearance, and those who had been assembled on the cross-roads joined the crowd at the chapel. No sooner was it bruited among them that their pastor had arrived, than the noise, gabble, singing, and laughing were immediately hushed; the shebeen and public houses were left untenanted; and all flocked to the chapel-

green, where mass was to be said, as the crowd was too large to be contained within the small chapel.

Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland were among the last who sought the "green;" as lovers, they probably preferred walking apart to the inconvenience of being jostled by the multitude. As they sauntered on slowly after the rest, Mike felt himself touched on the shoulder, and on turning round found Darby More beside him.

"It's painful to my feelins," observed the mendicant, "to have to say this blessed night that your father's son should act so shabby an' ondacent."

"Saints above! how, Darby?"

"Why, don't you know that only for me—for what I heard, an' what I tould you—you'd not have the purty girl here at your elbow? Wasn't it, as I said, his intintion to come an' whip up the colleen to Kilnaheery while the family 'ud be at mass; sure only for this, I say, you bosthoon, an' that *I* made you bring her to mass, where 'ud the purty colleen be? why half way to Kilnaheery, an' the girl disgraced for ever!"

"Thrue for you, Darby, I grant it: but what do you want me to do?"

"Oh, for that matther, nothin' at all, Mike; only I suppose that when your tailor made the clothes an you, he put no pockets to them?"

"Oh, I see where you are, Darby! well here's a crown for you; an' when Peggy an' I's made man an' wife you'll get another."

"Mike, achora, I see you *are* your father's son still; now listen to me: first, you needn't fear sudden death

while you keep that blessed carol about you; next, get your friends together goin' home, for Frank might jist take the liberty, wid about a score of his 'boys,' to lift her from you even thin. Do the thing I say—don't thrust him; an', moreover, watch in her father's house to-night wid your friends. Thirdly, make it up wid Frank; there's an oath upon you both, *you persave?* Make it up wid him, if he axes you: don't have a broken oath upon you; for if you refuse, he'll get you put out o' connexion,* an' that 'ud plase him to the back-bone."

Mike felt the truth and shrewdness of this advice, and determined to follow it. Both young men had been members of an illegal society, and in yielding to their passions so far as to assault each other, had been guilty of perjury. The following Christmas-day had been appointed by their parish Delegates to take the quarrel into consideration; and the best means of escaping censure was certainly to express regret for what had occurred, and to terminate the hostility by an amicable adjustment of their disputes.

They had now reached the chapel-green, where the scene that presented itself was so striking and strange, that we will give the reader an imperfect sketch of its appearance. He who stood at midnight upon a little mount which rose behind the chapel, might see between five and six thousand torches, all blazing together, and forming a level mass of red dusky light, burning against the dark horizon. These torches were so close to each other that their light seemed to blend, as if they had constituted one wide surface of flame;

* Secret party.

and nothing could be more preternatural-looking than the striking and devotional countenances of those who were assembled at their midnight worship, when observed beneath this canopy of fire. The Mass was performed under the open sky, upon a table covered with the sacrificial linen and other apparatus for the ceremony. The priest stood, robed in white, with two large torches on each side of his book, reciting the prayers in a low, rapid voice, his hands raised, whilst the congregation were hushed and bent forward in the reverential silence of devotion, their faces touched by the strong blaze of the torches into an expression of deep solemnity. The scenery about the place was wild and striking; and the stars, scattered thinly over the heavens, twinkled with a faint religious light, that blended well with the solemnity of this extraordinary worship, and rendered the rugged nature of the abrupt cliffs and precipices, together with the still outline of the stern mountains, sufficiently visible to add to the wildness and singularity of the ceremony. In fact, there was an unearthly character about it; and the spectre-like appearance of the white-robed priest as he

"Muttered his prayer to the midnight air,"

would almost impress a man with the belief that it was a meeting of the dead, and that the priest was repeating, like the Grey Friar, his

"Mass of the days that were gone."

On the ceremony being concluded, the scene, however, was instantly changed: the lights were waved and scattered promiscuously among each other, giving an idea of confusion and hurry that was strongly contrasted with the death-like stillness that prevailed a

few minutes before. The gabble and laugh were again heard loud and hearty, and the public and shebeen houses once more became crowded. Many of the young people made, on these occasions, what is called "a runaway;"* and other peccadilloes took place, for which the delinquents were "either read out from the altar," or sent probably to St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg, to do penance. Those who did not choose to stop in the whiskey houses now hurried home with all speed, to take some sleep before early Mass, which was to be performed the next morning about day-break. The same number of lights might therefore be seen streaming in different ways over the parish; the married men holding the torches, and leading their wives; bachelors escorting their sweethearts, and not unfrequently extinguishing their flambeaus, that the dependence of the females upon their care and protection might more lovingly call forth their gallantry.

When Mike Reillaghan considered with due attention the hint which Darby More had given him, touching the necessity of collecting his friends as an escort for Peggy Gartland, he had strong reasons to admit its justness and propriety. After Mass he spoke to about two dozen young fellows who joined him, and under their protection Peggy now returned safely to her father's house.

Frank M'Kenna and his wife reached home about two o'clock; the dance was comparatively thin, though still kept up with considerable spirit. Having solemnized himself by the grace of so sacred a rite,

* Rustic elopement.

Frank thought proper to close the amusement, and recommend those whom he found in the barn to return to their respective dwellings.

" You have had a merry night, childher," said he; " but too much o' one thing's good for nothin'; so don't make a toil of a pleasure, but go all home dacently an' soberly, in the name o' God."

This advice was accordingly followed. The youngsters separated, and M'Kenna joined his family, " to have a sup along wid them an' Barny, in honour of what they had hard." It was upon this occasion he missed his son Frank, whose absence from the dance he had not noticed since his return until then.

" Musha, where's Frank?" he inquired: " I'll warrant him away wid his blackguards upon no good. God look down upon him! Many a black heart has that boy left us! If it's not the will o' heaven, I fear he'll come to no good. Barny, is he long gone from the dance?"

" Throth, Frank, wid the noise an' dancin', an' me bein' *dark*," replied Barny, shrewdly, " I can't take an me to say. For all you spake agin him, the sorra one of him but's a clane, dacent, spirited boy, as there is widin a great ways of him. Here's all your healths! Faix, girls, you'll all sleep sound to-night."

" Well," said Mrs. M'Kenna, " the knowledge of that Darby More is onknowable! Here's a carol I bought from him, an' if you wor but to hear the explanations he put to it! Why Father Hoolaghan could hardly outdo him!"

" Divil a man in the five parishes can dance ' Jig Polthogue' wid him, for all that," said Barny. Many

a time Granua an' I played it for him, an' you'd know the tune upon his feet. He undherstands a power o' ranns an' prayers, an' has charms an' holy herbs for all kinds of ailments, no doubt."

"These men, you see," observed Mrs. M'Kenna, in the true spirit of credulity and superstition, "may do many things that the likes of us oughtn't to do, by rason of their great fastin' an' prayin'."

"Thrue for you, Alley," replied her husband; "but come, let us have a sup more in comfort: the sleep's gone *a shraugran* an us this night, any way, so, Barny, give us a song, an' afther that we'll have a taste o' prayers, to close the night."

"But you don't think of the long journey I've before me," replied Barny: "howandiver, if you promise to send some one home wid me, we'll have the song. I wouldn't care, but the night bein' dark, you see, I'll want somebody to guide me."

"Faith, an' it's but rasonable, Barny, an' you must get Rody home wid you. I suppose he's asleep in his bed by this, but we'll rouse him!"

Barny replied by a loud triumphant laugh, for this was one of his standing jests.

"Well, Frank," said he, "I never thought you war so soft, an' me can pick my steps the same at night as in daylight. Sure that's the way I *done* them to-night, when one o' Granua's strings broke. 'Sweets o' rosin,' says I; 'a candle—bring me a candle immedintly.' An' down came Rody in all haste wid a candle. 'Six eggs to you, Rody,' says myself, 'an' half-a-dozen o' them ratten! but you're a bright boy, to bring a lit candle to a blind man!'

and then he stood a *bouloare* to the whole house—ha, ha, ha!"

Barny, who was not the man to rise first from the whiskey, commenced the relation of his choicest anecdotes; old Frank and the family, being now in a truly genial mood, entered into the spirit of his jests, so that between chat, songs, and whiskey, the hour had now advanced to four o'clock. The fiddler was commencing another song, when the door opened, and Frank presented himself, nearly, but not altogether in a state of intoxication; his face was besmeared with blood; and his whole appearance that of a man under the influence of strong passion, such as would seem to be produced by disappointment and defeat.

"What!" said the father; "is it snowin', Frank? Your clothes are covered wid snow!"

"Lord, guard us!" exclaimed the mother, "is that blood upon your face, Frank?"

"It *is* snowin', and it *is* blood that's upon my face," answered Frank, moodily—"do you want to know more news?"

"Why, ay indeed," replied his mother, "we want to hear how you came to be cut?"

"You won't hear it, thin," he replied.

The mother was silent, for she knew the terrible fits of passion to which he was subject.

The father groaned deeply, and exclaimed—"Frank, Frank, God help you, an' show you the sins you're committin', an' the heart-scaldin' you're givin' both your mother an' me! What fresh skrimmage had you that you're in that state?"

"Spare yourself the throuble of inquirin'," he

replied: "all I can say," he continued, starting up into sudden fury—"all I can say, an' I say it—I swear it—where's the prayer-book?" and he ran franticly to a shelf beside the dresser on which the prayer-book lay,—"ay! by him that made me I'll sware it—by this sacred book, while I live, Mike Reillaghan, the husband of Peggy Gartland you'll never be, if I should swing for it! Now you all seen I kissed the book!" As he spoke, he tossed it back upon the shelf.

The mirth that had prevailed in the family was immediately hushed, and a dead silence ensued; Frank sat down, but instantly rose again, and flung the chair from him with such violence that it was crashed to pieces; he muttered oaths and curses, ground his teeth, and betrayed all the symptoms of jealousy, hatred, and disappointment.

"Frank, abouchal," said Barny, commencing to address him in a conciliatory tone—"Frank, man alive"——

"Hould your tongue, I say, you blind vagabone, or by the night above us, I'll break your fiddle over your skull, if you dar to say another word. What I swore I'll do, an' let no one crass me."

He was a powerful young man, and such was his temper, and so well was it understood, that not one of the family durst venture a word of remonstrance.

The father rose, went to the door, and returned. "Barny," said he, "you must contint yourself where you are for this night. It's snowin' heavily, so you had betther sleep wid Rody; I see a light in the barn, I suppose he's after bringin' in his bed an' makin' it."

"I'll do any thing," replied the poor fiddler, now apprehensive of violence from the outrageous temper of young Frank.

"Well, thin," added the good man, "let us all go to bed, in the name of God. Micaul, bring Barny to the barn, and see that he's comfortable."

This was complied with, and the family quietly and timidly retired to rest, leaving the violent young man storming and digesting his passion, behind them.

Mass on Christmas morning was then, as now, performed at day-break, and again the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the parish were up betimes to attend it. Frank M'Kenna's family were assembled, notwithstanding their short sleep, at an early breakfast; but their meal, in consequence of the unpleasant sensation produced by the outrage of their son, was less cheerful than it would otherwise have been. Perhaps, too, the gloom which hung over them, was increased by the snow that had fallen the night before, and by the wintry character of the day, which was such as to mar much of their expected enjoyment. There was no allusion made to their son's violence over night; neither did he himself appear to be in any degree affected by it. When breakfast was over, they prepared to attend mass, and, what was unusual, young Frank was the first to set out for the chapel.

"Maybe," said the father, after he was gone—"maybe that fool of a boy is sarry for his behaviour. It's many a day since I knew him to go to mass of his own accord. It's a good sign, any way."

"Musha," inquired his mother, "what could happen atween him an' that civil boy, Mike Reillaghan?"

" The sorra one o' me knows," replied his father; " an' now that I think of it, sure enough there was none o' them at the dance last night, although I sent himself down for them. Micaul," he added, addressing the other son, " will you put an your big coat, slip down to Reillaghan's, an' bring me word what came atween them at all; an' tell Owen himself the thruth, that this boy's brakin' our hearts by his coorses."

Micaul, who, although he knew the cause of the enmity between these rivals, was ignorant of that which occasioned his brother's rash oath, also felt anxious to ascertain the circumstances of the last quarrel. For this purpose, as well as in obedience to his father's wishes, he proceeded to Reillaghan's, and arrived just as Darby More and young Mike had set out for mass.

" What," said the mendicant, " can be bringin' Micaul down, I wondher? somethin' about that slip o' grace, his brother."

" I suppose so," said Mike; " an' I wish the same slip was as dacent an' inoffensive as he is. I don't know a boy livin' I'd go farther for nor the same Micaul. He's a credit to the family as much as the other's a stain upon them."

" Well, any how, you war Frank's match, an' more, last night. How bitther he was bint on bringin' Peggy aff, when he an' his set waited till they seen the country clear, an' thought the family asleep! Had you man for man, Mike?"

" Ay, about that; an' we set so snug in Peggy's that you'd hear a pin fallin'. A hard tug, too, there

was in the beginnin'; but whin they found that we had a strong back, they made away, an' we gave them purshute from about the house."

"You may thank me, any how, for havin' her to the good; but I knew by my dhrame, wid the help o' God, that there was somethin' to happen; by the same a token, that your mother's an the high horse about that dhrame. I'm to tell it to her, wid the sinse of it, in the evenin', when the day's past, an' all of us in comfort."

"What was it, Darby? sure you may let me hear it."

"Maybe I will in the evenin'. It was about you an' Peggy, the darlin'. But how will you manage in regard of brakin' the oath, an' sthrikin' a brother?"

"Why, that I couldn't get over it, whin *he* sthruck me first: sure he's worse off. I'll lave it to the Dilegates, an' whatever judgment they give out, I'll take wid it."

"Well," observed Darby, sarcastically, "it made him do one good turn, any way."

"What was that, Darby? for good turns are but scarce wid him."

"Why it made him hear mass to-day," replied the mendicant; "an' that's what he hadn't the grace to do this many a year. It's away in the mountains wid his gun he'd be, thracin', an' a fine day it is for it—only this business prevints him. Now, Mike," observed Darby, "as we're comin' out upon the *boreen*, I'll fall back, an' do you go an: I have part of my *padareens* to say, before I get to the chapel, wid a blessin'; an' we had as good not be seen together."

The mendicant, as he spoke, pulled out a long pair of beads, on which he commenced his prayers, occasionally accosting an acquaintance with a *gho mhany Deah ghud*,* and sometimes taking a part in the conversation for a minute or two, after which he resumed the prayers as before.

The day was now brightening up, although the earlier part of the morning had threatened severe weather. Multitudes were flocking to the chapel; the men well secured in frieze great coats, in addition to which, many of them had their legs bound with straw ropes, and others with leggings made of old hats cut up for the purpose. The women were secured with cloaks, the hoods of which were tied with kerchiefs of some showy colour, over their bonnets or their caps, which, together with their elbows projecting behind, for the purpose of preventing their dress from being dabbled in the snow, gave them a marked and most picturesque appearance.

Reillaghan and M'Kenna both reached the chapel a considerable time before the arrival of the priest; and as a kind of Whiteboy committee was to sit for the purpose of investigating their conduct in holding out so dangerous an example as they did, by striking each other, contrary to their oaths as brothers under the same system, they accordingly were occupied each in collecting his friends, and conciliating those whom they supposed to be hostile to them on the opposite party. It had been previously arranged that this committee should hold a court of inquiry, and that, provided they could not agree, the matter was to be

* God save you!

referred to two hedge-schoolmasters, who should act as umpires; but if it happened that the latter could not decide it, there was no other tribunal appointed to which a final appeal could be made.

According to these regulations, a court was opened in a shebeen-house that stood somewhat distant from the road. Twelve young fellows seated themselves on each side of a deal table, with one of the umpires at each end of it, and a bottle of whiskey in the middle. In a higher sphere of life it is usual to refer such questionable conduct as occurs in duelling, to the arbitration of those who are known to be qualified by experience in the duello. On this occasion the practice was not departed from, those who had been thus selected as the Committee, being the most notoriously pugnacious "boys" in the whole parish.

"Now, boys," said one of the schoolmasters, "let us proceed to operations wid proper spirit," and he filled a glass of whiskey as he spoke. "Here's all your healths, and next, pace and unanimity to us! Call in the culprits."

Both were accordingly admitted, and the first speaker resumed—"Now, in the second place, I'll read yees that part o' the oath which binds us all under the obligation of not strikin' one another—hem! hem!—'No brother is to strike another, knowing him to be such; he's to strike him—hem!—neither in fair nor market, at home nor abroad, neither in public nor in private, neither on Sunday nor week-day, present or absent, nor—'

"I condimn that," observed the other master,—"I condimn it, as bein' too latitudinarian in principle,

an' containing a paradogma; besides it's bad grammar."

"You're rather airly in the market wid your bad grammar," replied the other; "I'll grant you the paradogma, but I'll stand up for the grammar of it while I'm able to stand up for any thing."

"Faith, an' if you rise to stand up for that," replied his friend, "and doesn't choose to sit down till you prove it to be good grammar, you'll be a standin' joke all your life."

"I bleeve it's purty conspicuous in the parish, that I have often, in our disputations about grammar, left you widout a leg to stand upon at all," replied the other.

This sally was well received, but his opponent was determined to push home the argument at once.

"I would be glad to know," he inquired, "by what beautiful invintion a man could contrive to strike another in his *absence?* Have you good grammar for *that?*"

"And did you never hear of detraction?" replied his opponent; "that is, a man who's in the habit of spaking falsehoods of his friends whin their backs are turned—that is to say, whin they are absent. Now, sure, if a man's absent whin his back's turned, mayn't any man whose back's turned, be said to be absent—ergo, to strike a man behind his back is to strike him whin he's absent. Does that confound you? where's your logic and grammar to meet proper ratiocination like what I'm displaying?"

"Faith," replied the other, "you may have had logic and grammar, but I'll take my oath it was in

your younger years, for both have been *absent* ever since I knew you: they turned their *backs* upon you man alive; for they didn't like, you see, to be keepin' bad company—ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you poor cratur," said his antagonist, "if I choose to let myself out, I'd make a hare of you in no time entirely."

"And an ass of yourself," retorted the other: "but you may save yourself the throuble in regard of the last, for your frinds know you to be an ass ever since they remimber you. You have them here, man alive, the auricles," and he pointed to his ears.

"Hut! get out wid you, you poor Jamaica-headed castigator you; sure you never had more nor a thimble-full o' sinse on any subject."

"Faith, an' the thimble that measured yours was a tailor's, one widout a bottom in it, an' good measure you got, you miserable flagellator! what are you but a *nux vomica?* A fit o' the ague's a thrifle compared to your asinity."

The "boys" were delighted at this encounter, and utterly forgetful of the pacific occasion on which they had assembled, began to pit them against each other with great glee.

"That's a hard hit, Misther Costigan; but you won't let it pass, any how."

"The ague an' you are ould acquaintances," retorted Costigan; "whenever a skrimmage takes place, you're sure to resave a visit from it."

"Why, I'm not such a haro as yourself," replied his rival, "nor such a great hand at batin' the *absent* —ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Misther Connell—that's a leveller; come, Misther Costigan, bedad if you don't answer that you're bate."

"By this and by that, man alive, if you don't mend your manners, maybe I'd make it betther for you to be absent also. You'll only put me to the throuble of mendin' them for you."

"Mend my manners!" exclaimed his opponent, with a bitter sneer,—"*you* to mend them! out wid your budget and your hammer, then; you're the very tinker of good manners—bekase for one dacency you'd mend, you'd spoil twenty."

"I'm able to hammer you at all events, or, for that matther, any one of your illiterate gineration. Sure it's well known that you can't tache Voshther (Voster) widout the Kay."

"Hould there, if you plase," exclaimed one of his opponent's relations; "don't lug in *his family; that's* known to be somewhat afore your own, I bleeve. There's no *Informers* among them, Misther Costigan: keep at home, masther, if you plase."

"At *home!* that's more than some o' your own *cleaveens** have been able to do," rejoined Costigan, alluding to one of the young fellow's acquaintances who had been transported.

"Do you mane to put an affront upon me?" said the other.

"Since the *barrhad*† fits you, wear it," replied Costigan.

"Very right, masther, make him a present of it,"

* Distant relations. † Cap.

exclaimed one of Costigan's distant relations; "he desarves that, an' more if he'd get it."

"Do I?" said the other; "an' what have *you* to say on the head of it, Bartle?"

"Why, not much," answered Bartle, "only that you ought to've left it betune them; an' that *I'll* back Misther Costigan agin any rascal that 'ud say there was ever a dhrop of his blood in an Informer's veins."

"*I* say it for one," replied the other.

"And I, for another," said Connell; "an' what's worse, I'll hould a wager, that if he was searched this minute, you'd find a Kay to Gough in his pocket, although he throws Voshther in my teeth: the dunce never goes widout one. Sure he's not able to set a dacent copy, or headline, or to make a dacent hook, nor a hanger, nor a down stroke, and was a poor scholar, too!"

"I'll give you a down stroke in the mane time, you ignoramus," said the pedagogue, throwing himself to the end of the table at which his enemy sat, and laying him along the floor by a single blow.

He was instantly attacked by the friend of the prostrate academician, who was in his turn attacked by the friend of Costigan. The adherents of the respective teachers were immediately rushing to a general engagement, when the door opened, and Darby More made his appearance.

"Asy!—stop wid yees!—hould back, ye disgraceful villains!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a thundering voice; "be asy, I say. Saints in glory, is this

the way you're settlin' the dispute between the two dacent young men, that's sorry, both o' them, I'll go bail, for what they done. Sit down, every one o' yees, or, by the blessed ordhers I wear about me, I'll report yees to Father Hoolaghan, an' have yees read out from the althar, or sint to Lough Derg! Sit down, I say!"

As he spoke, he extended his huge cant between the hostile parties, and thrust them one by one to their seats with such muscular energy, that he had them sitting before another blow could be given.

"Saints in glory!" he exclaimed again, "isn't this blessed doins an the sacred day that's in it! that a poor helpless ould man like me can't come to get somethin' to take away this misfortunit touch o' configuration that I'm afflicted wid in cowld weather—that I can't take a little sup of the only thing that cures me—widout your ructions and battles! You came here to make pace between two dacent men's childher, an' you're as bad, if not worse, yourselves! —Oh, wurrah dheelish, what's this! I'm in downright agony! Oh, murdher sheery! Has none o' yees a hand to thry if there's e'er a dhrop of relief in that bottle? or am I to die all out, in the face o' the world, for want of a sup o' somethin' to warm me?"

"Darby, thry the horn," said M'Kenna.

"Here, Darby," said one of them, "dhrink this off, an' my life for yours, it'll warm you to the marrow!"

"Och, musha, but I wanted it badly," replied Darby, swallowing it at once; "it's the only thing

does me good when I'm this way. *Deah Grasthias !** Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin !"

"I think," said M'Kenna, "that what's in the horn's far afore it."

"Oh, thin, you thoughtless crathur, if you knew somethin' I hard about you a while ago, you'd think otherwise. But, indeed, it's thrue for you; I'm sure I'd be sarry to compare what's in *it*, to any thing o' the kind I tuck. *Deah Grasthias !* Throth, I'm asier now a great dale nor I was."

"Will you take another sup, Darby?" inquired the young fellow in whose hands the bottle was now nearly empty; "there's jist about another glass."

"Indeed an' I will, *a villish ;*† an' sure you'll have my blessin' for it, an' barrin' the priest's own, you couldn't have a more luckier one, blessed be God for it—sure *that's* well known. In throth, they never came to ill that had it, an' never did good that got my curse! Houp! do you hear how that rises the wind off o' my stomach? Houp!—*Deah Grasthias* for that!"

"How did you larn all the prayers an' charms you have, Darby?" inquired the bottle-holder.

"It would take me too long to tell you that, *a villish!* But, childher, now that you're all together, make it up wid one another. Aren't you all frinds an' brothers, *sworn* brothers, an why would you be fightin' among other? Misther Costigan, give me your hand; sure I heard a thrifle o' what you were sayin' while I was suckin' my dudeen at the fire widout.

* God be praised.

† My sweet!—an epithet of endearment.

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Come here, Misther Connell. Now, before the saints in glory, I lay my bitther curse an him that refuses to shake hands wid his inimy. There now—I'm proud to see it Mike, avourneen, come here—Frank M'Kenna, *gutsho*,* walk over here; my bitther hearts curse upon both of yees, if you don't make up all quarrels this minnit! Are you willin', Mike Reillaghan?"

"I have no objection in life," replied Mike, "if he'll say that Peggy Gartland won't be put to any more throuble through his manes."

"There's my hand, Mike," said Frank, "that I forget an' forgive all that's past; an' in regard o' Peggy Gartland, why, as she's so dark agin me, I lave her to you for good."†

"Well! see what it is to have the good intintions! —to be makin' pace an' frindship atween inimies! That's all I think about, an' nothin' gives me greater pleas——Saints o' glory!—what's this!—oh wurra! —that thief of a—wurrah dheelish!—that touch o' configuration 's comin' back agin!—oh, thin, but it's hard to get it undher!—oh!"—

"I'm sarry for it, Darby," replied he who held the now empty bottle; "for the whiskey's out."

"Throth, an' I'm sarry myself, for nothin' else does me good; an' Father Hoolaghan says nothin' *can* keep it down, barrin' the sup o' whiskey. It's best burnt, wid a little bit o' butther an it; but I can't get that always, it overtakes me so suddenly. Glory be to God!"

"Well," said M'Kenna, "as Mike an' myself was

* Come hither. † In future—altogether.

the manes of bringin' us together, why, if he joins me, we'll have another bottle."

"Throth, an' it's fair an' dacent, an' he must do it; by the same a token, that I'll not lave the house till it's dhrunk, for there's no thrustin' yees together, you're so hot-headed an' ready to rise the hand," said Darby.

M'Kenna and Mike, having been reconciled, appeared in a short time warmer friends than ever. While the last bottle went round, those who had before been on the point of engaging in personal conflict, now laughed at their own foibles, and expressed the kindness and good-will which they felt for each other at heart.

"Now," said the mendicant, "go all of you to mass, an' as soon as you can, to confission, for it's not good to have the broken oath an' the sin of it over one. Confiss it, an' have your consciences light: sure it's a happiness that you *can* have the guilt taken off o' yees, childher."

"Thrue for you, Darby," they replied; "an' we'll be thinkin' of your advice."

"Ay do, childher; an' there's Father Hoolaghan comin' down the road, so, in the name o' Goodness, we haven't a minnit to lose."

They all left the shebeen-house as he spoke except Frank and himself, who remained until they had gone out of hearing.

"Darby," said he, "I want you to come up to our house in the mornin', an' bring along wid you the things that you stamp the crass upon the skin wid: I'm goin' to get the crucifix put upon me. But on

the paril o' your life, don't brathe a word of it to mortual."

"God enable you, avick! it's a good intintion. I will indeed be up wid you—airly, too, wid a blessin'. It is that, indeed—a good intintion, sure enough."

The parish chapel was about one hundred perches from the shebeen-house in which the "boys" had assembled; the latter were proceeding there in a body when Frank overtook them.

"Mike," said he aside to Reillaghan, "we'll have time enough—walk back a bit; I'll tell you what I'm thinkin', you never seen in your life a finer day for thracin'; what 'ud you say if we give the boys the slip, never heed mass, an' set off to the mountains?"

"Won't we have time enough afther mass?" said Reillaghan.

"Why, man, sure you *did* hear mass *once* to-day. Weren't you at it last night? No, indeed, we won't be time enough afther it; for this bein' Chris'mas day, we must be home at dinner time; you know it's not lucky to be from the family upon set days. Hang-an-ounty, come; we'll have fine sport! I have cock-sticks* enough. The best part of the day 'll be gone if we wait for mass. Come, an' let us start."

"Well, well," replied Reillaghan, "the sarra hair I care; so let us go. I'd like myself to have a rap at the hares in the Black Hills, sure enough; but as it 'ud be remarkable for us to be seen lavin' mass, why

* A cock-stick was so called from being used on Cock-Monday, to throw at a cock tied to a stake. It was about the length of a common stick, but much heavier and thicker at one end.

let us crass the field here, an' get out upon the road above the bridge."

To this his companion assented, and they both proceeded at a brisk pace, each apparently anxious for the sport, and resolved to exhibit such a frank cordiality of manner as might convince the other that all their past enmity was forgotten and forgiven.

Their direct path to the mountains lay by M'Kenna's house, where it was necessary they should call, in order to furnish themselves with cock-sticks, and to bring dogs which young Frank kept for the purpose. The inmates of the family were at mass, with the exception of Frank's mother, and Rody, the servant man, whom they found sitting on his own bed in the barn, engaged at cards, the right hand against the left.

"Well, Rody," said Frank, "who's winnin'?"

"The left entirely," replied his companion: "the divil a game at all the right's gettin', whatever's the rason of it, an' I'm always turnin' up black. I hope none of my frinds or acquaintances will die soon."

"Throw them aside—quit of them," said Frank, "give them to me, I'll put them past; an' do you bring us out the gun. I've the powdher an' shot here; we may as well bring her, an' have a slap at them. One o' the officers in the barracks of ——— keeps me in powdher an' shot, besides givin' me an odd crown, an' I keep him in game."

"Why, thin, boys," observed Rody, "what's the manin' o' this?—two o' the biggest inimies in Europe

last night an' this mornin', an' now as great as two thieves! How does that come?"

"Very asy, Rody," replied Reillaghan; "we made up the quarrel, shuck hands, an's good frinds as ever."

"Bedad, that bates cock-fightin'," said Rody, as he went to bring in the gun.

In the mean time, Frank, with the cards in his hand, went to the eve of the barn, thrust them up under the thatch, and took out of the same nook a flask of whiskey.

"We'll want this," said he, putting it to his lips, and gulping down a portion. "Come, Mike, be tastin'; an' aftherwards put this in your pocket."

Mike followed his example, and was corking the flask when Rody returned with the gun.

"She's charged," said Frank; "but we'd betther put in fresh primin', for fraid of her hangin' fire."

He then primed the gun, and handed it to Reillaghan: "Do *you* keep the gun, Mike," he added, "an' I'll keep the cock-sticks. Rody, I'll bet you a shillin' I kill more wid the cock-stick, nor he will wid the gun. Will you take me up?"

"I know a safer thrick," replied Rody: "you're a dead aim wid the cock-stick, sure enough, an' a deader wid the gun, too: catch me at it."

"You show some sinse, for a wondher," observed Frank, as he and his companion left the barn, and turned towards the mountains, which rose frowning behind the house.

Rody stood looking after them until they wound up

slowly out of sight among the hills; he then shook his head two or three times, and exclaimed, "By dad, there's somethin' in this, if one could make out what it is. I know Frank."

Christmas-day passed among the peasantry, as it usually passes in Ireland. Friends met before dinner in their own, in their neighbours', in shebeen, or in public-houses, where they drank, sang, or fought, according to their natural dispositions, or the quantity of liquor they had taken. The festivity of the day might be known by the unusual reek of smoke that danced from each chimney, by the number of persons who crowded the roads, by their bran-new dresses—for if a young man or country girl can afford a dress at all, they provide it for Christmas,—and by the striking appearance of those who, having drunk a little too much, were staggering home in the purest happiness, singing, stopping their friends, shaking hands with them, or kissing them, without any regard to sex. Many a time might be seen two Irishmen, who had got drunk together, leaving a fair or market, their arms about each other's necks, from whence they only removed them to kiss and hug one another the more lovingly. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing more probable than that these identical two will enjoy the luxury of a mutual battle, by way of episode, and again proceed on their way, kissing and hugging as if nothing had happened to interrupt their friendship. All the usual effects of jollity and violence, fun and fighting, love and liquor, were, of course, to be seen, felt, heard, and understood on this day, in a manner much more remarkable than on common occasions;

for it may be observed, that the national festivals of the Irish bring out their strongest points of character with peculiar distinctness.

The family of Frank M'Kenna were sitting down to their Christmas dinner; the good man had besought a blessing upon the comfortable and abundant fare of which they were about to partake, and nothing was amiss, save the absence of their younger son.

"Musha, where on earth can this boy be stayin'?" said the father: "I'm sure this, above all days in the year, is one he oughtn't to be from home an."

The mother was about to inform him of the son's having gone to the mountains, when the latter returned, breathless, pale, and horror-struck.

Rody eyed him keenly, and laid down the bit he was conveying to his mouth.

"Heavens above us!" exclaimed his mother, "what ails you?"

He only replied by dashing his hat upon the ground, and exclaiming, "Up wid yees!—up wid yees!—quit your dinners! Oh, Rody! what'll be done? Go down to Owen Reillaghan's—go 'way—go down—an' tell thim—oh, *vick-na-hoie!* but this was the unfortunate day to us all! Mike Reillaghan is shot wid my gun; she went off in his hand goin' over a snow wreath, an' he's lyin' dead in the mountains!"

The screams and the wailing which immediately rose in the family were dreadful. Mrs. M'Kenna almost fainted; and the father, after many struggles to maintain his firmness, burst into the bitter tears of disconsolation and affliction. Rody was calmer, but turned his eyes from one to another with a look of

deep compassion, and again eyed Frank keenly and suspiciously.

Frank's eye caught his, and the glance which had surveyed him with such scrutiny did not escape his observation. "Rody," said he, "do you go an' brake it to the Reillaghans: you're the best to do it; for, when we were settin' out, you saw that *he* carried the gun, an' not *me*."

"Thrue for you," said Rody; "I saw that, Frank, and can swear to it; but that's all I *did* see. I know nothing of what happened in the mountains."

"*Damnho sheery orth!** What do you mane you villain?" exclaimed Frank, seizing the tongs, and attempting to strike him: "do you dar to suspect that I had any hand in it!"

"*Wurrah dheelish*,† Frank," screamed the sisters, "are you goin' to murdher Rody?"

"*Murdher*," he shouted, in a paroxysm of fury, "why the curse o' God upon you all, what puts murdher into your heads? Is it my own family that's the first to charge me wid it?"

"Why, there's no one chargin' you wid it," replied Rody; "not one, whatever makes you take it to yourself."

"An' what did you look at me for, thin, the way you did? What did you look at me for, I say?"

"Is it any wondher," replied the servant, coolly, "when you had sich a dreadful story to tell?"

"Go off," replied Frank, now hoarse with passion —"go off, an' tell the Reillaghans what happened; but, by all the books that ever was opened or shut, if

* Eternal perdition on you! † Sweet Virgin!

you breathe a word about murdh—about—if you do, you villain, I'll be the death o' you!"

When Rody was gone on this melancholy errand, old M'Kenna first put the tongs, and every thing he feared might be used as a weapon by his frantic son, out of his reach; he then took down the book on which he had the night before sworn so rash and mysterious an oath, and desired the son to look upon it.

"Frank," said he, solemnly, "you swore on that blessed book last night, that Mike Reillaghan never would be the husband of Peggy Gartland—*He's a corpse to day!* Yes," he continued, "the good, the honest, the industhrious boy is"——his sobs became so loud and thick that he appeared almost suffocated. "Oh," said he, "may God pity *us!* As I hope to meet my blessed Saviour, who was born on this day, I would rather you wor the corpse, an' not Mike Reillaghan!"

"I don't doubt that," said the son, fiercely; "you never showed me much *grah*,* sure enough."

"Did you ever desarve it?" replied the father. "Heaven above me knows it was too much kindness was showed you. When you ought to have been well corrected, you got your will an' your way, an' now see the upshot."

"Well," said the son, "it's the last day ever I'll stay in the family; thrate me as bad as you plase. I'll take the king's bounty, an' list, if I live to see to-morrow."

"Oh, thin, in the name o' Goodness do so," said

* Affection.

the father; "an' so far from previntin' you, we'll bless you when you're gone, for goin'."

"Arrah, Frank, aroon," said Mrs. M'Kenna, who was now recovered, "maybe, afther all, it was only an accident: sure we often hard of sich things. Don't you remimber Squire Elliott's son, that shot himself by accident, out fowlin'? Frank, can you clear yourself afore us?"

"Ah, Alley! Alley!" exclaimed the father, wiping away his tears, "don't you remimber his *oath*, last night?"

"What oath?" inquired the son, with an air of surprise—"What oath, last night? I know I was dhrunk last night, but I remimber nothing about an oath."

"Do you deny it, you hardened boy?"

"I *do* deny it; an' I'm *not* a hardened boy. What do you all mane? do yees want to dhrive me mad? I know nothin' about any oath last night;" replied the son in a loud voice.

The grief of the mother and daughters was loud during the pauses of the conversation. Micaul, the eldest son, sat beside his father in tears.

"Frank," said he, "many an advice I gave you between ourselves, and you know how you tuck them. When you'd stale the oats, an' the meal, and the phayties, an' hay, at night, to have money for your cards an' dhrinkin', I kept it back, an' said nothin' about it. I wish I hadn't done so, for it wasn't for your good; but it was my desire to have as much pace and quietness as possible."

"Frank," said the father, eying him solemnly,

" it's *possible* that you *do* forget the oath you made last night, for you war in liquor: I would give the wide world that it was thrue. Can you now, in the presence of God, clear yourself of havin' act or part in the death of Mike Reillaghan?"

" What 'ud ail me," said the son, " if I liked?"

" Will you do it now for our satisfaction, an' take a load of misery off of our hearts? It's the laste you may do, if you *can* do it. In the presence of the great God, will you clear yourself now?"

" I suppose," said the son, " I'll have to clear myself to-morrow; an' there's no use in my doin' it more than wanst. When the time comes, I'll do it."

The father put his hands on his eyes, and groaned aloud: so deep was his affliction, that the tears trickled through his fingers during this fresh burst of sorrow. The son's refusal to satisfy them renewed the grief of all, as well as of the father: it rose again, louder than before, whilst young Frank sat opposite the door, silent and sullen.

It was now dark, but the night was calm and agreeable. M'Kenna's family felt the keen affliction which we have endeavoured to describe; the dinner was put hastily aside, and the festive spirit peculiar to this night became changed into one of gloom and sorrow. In this state they sat, when the voice of grief was heard loud in the distance; the strong cry of men, broken and abrupt, mingled with the shrieking wail of female lamentation.

The M'Kennas started, and Frank's countenance assumed an expression which it would be difficult to describe. There was, joined to his extreme paleness,

a restless, apprehensive, and determined look; each trait apparently struggling for the ascendency in his character, and attempting to stamp his countenance with its own expression.

"Do you hear *that?*" said his father. "Oh, musha, Father of heaven, look down an' support that family this night! Frank, if you take my advice, you'll lave their sight; for surely if they brained you on the spot, who could blame them?"

"Why ought I lave their sight?" replied Frank. "I tell you all that I had no hand in his death. The gun went off by accident as he was crassin' a wreath o' snow. I was afore him, and when I heard the report, an' turned round, there he lay, shot an' bleedin'. I thought it mightn't signify, but on lookin' at him closely, I found him quite dead. I then ran home, never touchin' the gun at all, till his family an' the neighbours 'ud see him. Surely, it's no wondher I'd be distracted in my mind; but that's no rason you should all open upon me, as if *I* had murdhered the boy!"

"Well," said the father, "I'm glad to hear you say even that much. I hope it may be betther wid you than we all think; an' oh! grant it, sweet Mother o' Heaven, this day! Now carry yourself quietly afore the people. If they abuse you, don't fly into a passion, but make allowance for their grief and misery."

In the mean time, the tumult was deepening as it approached M'Kenna's house. The report had almost instantly spread through the village in which Reillaghan lived; and the loud cries of his father and

brothers, who, in the wildness of their despair, continually called upon his name, had been heard at the houses which lay scattered over the neighbourhood. Their inmates, on listening to such unusual sounds, sought the direction from which they proceeded, for it was quite evident that some terrible calamity had befallen the Reillaghans, in consequence of the son's name being borne on the blasts of night with such loud and overwhelming tones of grief and anguish. The assembly, on reaching M'Kenna's, might, therefore, be numbered at thirty, including the females of Reillaghan's immediate family, who had been strung by the energy of despair to a capability of bearing any fatigue, or rather to an utter insensibility of all bodily suffering.

We must leave the scene which ensued to the reader's imagination, merely observing, that as neither the oath which young Frank had taken the preceding night, nor indeed the peculiar bitterness of his enmity towards the deceased, was known by the Reillaghans, they did not, therefore, discredit the account of his death which they had heard.

Their grief was exclamatory and full of horror: consisting of prolonged shrieks on the part of the women, and frantic howlings on that of the men. The only words they uttered were his name, with epithets and ejaculations. *Oh a Vichaul dheelish—a Vichaul dheelish—a bouchal bane machree—wuil thu marra—wuil thu marra?* "Oh, Michael, the beloved—Michael, the beloved—fair boy of our heart—are you dead?—are you dead?"

From M'Kenna's the crowd, at the head of which

was Darby More, proceeded towards the mountains, many of them bearing torches, such as had been used on their way to the Midnight Mass. The moon had disappeared, the darkness was deepening, and the sky was overhung with black heavy clouds, that gave a stormy character to scenery, in itself remarkably wild and gloomy.

Young M'Kenna and the pilgrim led them to the dreary waste in which the corpse lay. It was certainly an awful spectacle to behold these unhappy people toiling up the mountain solitude at such an hour, their convulsed faces thrown into striking relief by the light of the torches, and their cries rising in wild irregular cadences upon the blast which swept over them with a dismal howl, in perfect character with their affliction, and the circumstances which produced it.

On arriving within view of the corpse, there was a slight pause; for, notwithstanding the dreadful paroxysms of their grief, there was something still more startling and terrible in contemplating the body thus stretched out in the stillness of death, on the lonely mountain. The impression it produced was peculiarly solemn: the grief was hushed for a moment, but only for a moment; it rose again wilder than before, and in a few minutes the friends of Reillaghan were about to throw themselves upon the body under the strong impulse of sorrow and affection.

The mendicant, however, stepped forward—"Hould back," said he; "it's hard to ax yees to do it, but still you must. Let the neighbours about us here examine the body, in ordher to see whether it mightn't be possible that the dacent boy came by his death

from somebody else's hand than his own. Hould forrid the lights," said he, "till we see how he's lyin', an' how the gun's lyin'."

"Darby," said young Frank, "I can't but be oblaged to you for that. You're the last man livin' ought to say what you said, afther you seein' us both forget an' forgive this day. I call upon you now to say whether you didn't see him an' me shakin' hands, an' buryin' all bad feelin' between us?"

"I'll spake to you jist now," replied the mendicant. "See here, neighbours, obsarve this; the boy was shot in the breast, an' here's not a snow wreath, but a weeshy dhrift that a child 'ud step acrass widout an accident. I tell yees all, that I suspect foul play in this."

"H——'s fire!" exclaimed the brother of the deceased, "what's that you say? What! Can it be—can it—can it—that you *murdhered* him, you villain, that's known to be nothin' but a villain? But I'll *do* for you!" He snatched at the gun as he spoke, and would probably have taken ample and fearful vengeance upon Frank, had not the mendicant and others prevented him.

"Have sinse," said Darby; "this is not the way to behave, man: lave the gun lyin' where she is, till we see more about us. Stand back there, an' let me look at these marks: ay, about five yards—there's the track of feet about five yards before him—here they turn about, an' go back. Here, Saviour o' the world! see here! the mark, clane an' clear, of the butt o' the gun! Now if that boy stretched afore us had the gun in *his* hand the time she went off, could the mark of

it be *here?* Bring me down the gun—an' the curse o' God upon her for an unlucky thief, whoever had her! It's thrue!—it's too thrue!" he continued—"the man that had the gun stood on *this spot.*"

"It's a falsity," said Frank; "it's a damnable falsity. Rody Teague, I call upon you to spake for me. Didn't you see, when we went to the hills, that it was Mike carried the gun, an' not me?"

"I did," replied Rody; "I can swear to that."

"Ay," exclaimed Frank, with triumph, "an' you yourself, Darby, saw us, as I said, makin' up whatsomever little differences there was betwixt us."

"I did," replied the mendicant, sternly; "but I heard you say, no longer ago than last night—*say!*—why you *shwore* it, man alive!—that if *you* wouldn't have Peggy Gartland, *he* never should. In your own stable I heard it, an' I was the manes of disappointin' you an' your gang, when you thought to take away the girl by force. You're well known too often to carry a fair face when the heart under it is black wid you."

"All I can say is," observed young Reillaghan, "that if it comes out agin you that you played him foul, all the earth won't save your life; I'll have your heart's blood, if I should hang for it a thousand times."

This dialogue was frequently interrupted by the sobbings and clamour of the women, and the detached conversation of some of the men, who were communicating to each other their respective opinions upon the melancholy event which had happened.

Darby More now brought Reillaghan's father aside, and thus addressed him:—

"*Gluntho!**—to tell God's thruth, I've sthrong suspicions that your son was murdhered. This sacred thing that I put the crass upon people's breasts wid, saves people from *hangin'* an' unnatural deaths. Frank spoke to me last night, no longer ago, to come up an' mark it an *him* to-morrow. My opinion is, that he intinded to murdher him at that time, an' wanted to have a protection agin what might happen to him in regard o' the black deed."

"Can we prove it agin him?" inquired the disconsolate father: "I know it'll be hard, as there was no one present but themselves; an' if he did it, surely he'll not confess it."

"We may make him do it, maybe," said the mendicant: "the villain's asily frightened, an' fond o' charms, an' *pishthrogues*,† an' sich holy things, for all his wickedness. Don't say a word. We'll take him by surprise; I'll call upon him to TOUCH THE CORPSE. Make them women—an' och, it's hard to expect it—make them stop clappin' their hands, an' cryin'; an' let there be a dead silence, if you can."

During this and some other observations made by Darby, Frank had got the gun in his possession; and, whilst seeming to be engaged in looking at it, and examining the lock, he actually contrived to reload it without having been observed.

"Now, neighbours," said Darby, "hould your tongues for a weeshy start, till I ax Frank M'Kenna

* Listen! † Superstitious spells and witcheries.

a question or two. Frank M'Kenna, as you hope to meet God at Judgment, did you take his life that's lyin' a corpse before us?"

"I did *not*," replied M'Kenna; "I could clear myself on all the books in Europe, that he met his death as I tould yees; an' more nor that," he added, dropping upon his knees, and uncovering his head, "*may I die widout priest or prayer—widout help, hope, or happiness*, UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE'S NOW STHRETCHED, *if I murdhered or shot him.*"

"I say amin to that," replied Darby: "*Oxis doxis glorioxis!*—So far, that's right, if the blood of him's not an you. But there's one thing more to be done: will you walk over, *undher the eye of God*, AN' TOUCH THE CORPSE? Hould back, neighbours, an' let him come over alone: I an' Owen Reillaghan will stand here wid the lights, to see if the corpse bleeds."

"Give me, too, a light," said M'Kenna's father, "my son must get fair play, any way: *I* must be a witness myself to it, an' will, too."

"It's but rasonable," said Owen Reillaghan; "come over beside Darby an' myself: I'm willin' that your son should stand or fall by what'll happen."

Frank's father, with a taper in his hand, immediately went, with a pale face and trembling steps, to the place appointed for him beside the corpse, where he took his stand.

When young M'Kenna heard Darby's last question, he seemed as if seized by an inward spasm: the start which he gave, and his gaspings for breath, were visible to all present. Had he seen the spirit of the murdered man before him, his horror could not have

been greater; for this ceremony had been considered a most decisive test in cases of suspicion of murder—an ordeal, indeed, to which few murderers wished to submit themselves. In addition to this we may observe, that Darby's knowledge of the young man's character was correct: with all his crimes he was weak-minded and superstitious.

He stood silent for some time after the ordeal had been proposed to him; his hair became literally erect with the dread of this formidable scrutiny, his cheeks turned white, and the cold perspiration fell from him in large drops. All his strength appeared to have departed from him; he stood, as if hesitating, and even the energy necessary to stand seemed to be the result of an effort.

"Remember," said Darby, pulling out the large crucifix which was attached to his beads, "that the eye of God is upon you. If you've committed the murdher, thrimble; if not, Frank, you've little to fear in touchin' the corpse."

Frank had not yet uttered a word; but, leaning himself on the gun, he looked wildly around him, cast his eyes up to the stormy sky, then turned them with a dead glare upon the corpse and the crucifix.

"Do you confiss the murdher?" said Darby.

"Murdher!" rejoined Frank: "no; I confess *no* murdher: you villain, do you *want* to make me guilty?—do you want to make me guilty, you deep villain?"

It seemed as if the current of his thoughts and feelings had taken a new direction, though it is probable that the excitement which appeared to be rising within him was only the courage of fear.

"You all wish to find me guilty," he added; "but I'll show yees that I'm not guilty."

He immediately walked towards the corpse, and stooping down, touched the body with one hand, holding the gun in the other. The interest of that moment was intense, and all eyes were strained towards the spot. Behind the corpse, at each shoulder—for the body lay against a small snow wreath, in a recumbent position—stood the father of the deceased and the father of the accused, each wound up by feelings of a directly opposite character to a pitch of dreadful excitement. Over them, in his fantastic dress and white beard, stood the tall mendicant, who held up his crucifix to Frank, with an awful menace upon his strongly marked countenance. At a little distance to the left of the body stood the other men who were assembled, having their torches held aloft in their hands, and their forms bent towards the corpse, their faces indicating expectation, dread, and horror. The female relations of the deceased stood nearest his remains, their torches extended in the same direction, their visages exhibiting the passions of despair and grief in their wildest characters, but as if arrested by some supernatural object immediately before their eyes, that produced a new and more awful feeling than grief. When the body was touched, Frank stood as if himself bound by a spell to the spot. At length he turned his eyes to the mendicant, who stood silent and motionless, with the crucifix still extended in his hand.

"Are you satisfied *now?*" said he.

"That's wanst," said the pilgrim: "you're to touch it three times."

Frank hesitated a moment, but immediately stooped again, and touched it twice in succession; but it remained still and unchanged as before. His father broke the silence by a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving to God for the vindication of his son's character which he had just witnessed.

"Now!" exclaimed M'Kenna, in a loud exulting tone, "you all see that I did *not* murdher him!"

"You DID!" said a voice, which was immediately recognised to be that of the deceased.

M'Kenna shrieked aloud, and immediately fled with his gun towards the mountains, pursued by Reillaghan's other son. The crowd rushed in towards the body, whilst sorrow, affright, exultation, and wonder, marked the extraordinary scene which ensued.

"Queen o' Heaven!" exclaimed old M'Kenna, "who could believe this only they hard it!"

"The murdher wouldn't lie!" shrieked out Mrs. Reillaghan—"the murdher wouldn't lie!—the blood o' my darlin' son spoke it!—his blood spoke it; or God, or his angel, spoke it for him!"

"It's beyant any thing ever known!" some exclaimed, "to come back, an' tell the deed upon his murdherer! God presarve us, an' save us, this night! I wish we wor at home out o' this wild place!"

Others said they had heard of such things; but this having happened before their own eyes, surpassed any thing that could be conceived.

The mendicant now advanced, and once more mysteriously held up his crucifix.

"Keep silence!" said he, in a solemn, sonorous voice: "Keep silence, I say, an' kneel down all o'

yees before what I've in my hand. If you want to know who or what the voice came from, I can tell yees :—IT WAS THE CRUCIFIX THAT SPOKE ! !"

This communication was received with a feeling of devotion too deep for words. His injunction was instantly complied with : they knelt, and bent down in worship before it in the mountain wilds.

" Ay," said he, " little yees know the virtues of that crucifix ! It was consecrated by a friar so holy that it was well known there was but the shadow of him upon the earth, the other part of him bein' night an' day in heaven among the arch-angels. It shows the power of this Crass, any way ; an' you may tell your frinds that I'll sell bades touched wid it to the faithful at sixpence a-piece. They can be put an your *padareens* as Dicades, wid a blessin'. Oxis doxis glorioxis—Amin ! Let us now bear the corpse home, antil it's dressed an' laid out dacently as it ought to be."

The body was then placed upon an easy litter, formed of great coats buttoned together, and supported by the strongest men present, who held it one or two at each corner. In this manner they advanced at a slow pace, until they reached Owen Reillaghan's house, where they found several of the country people assembled waiting for their return.

It was not until the body had been placed in an inner room, where none were admitted until it should be laid out, that the members of the family first noticed the prolonged absence of Reillaghan's other son. The moment it had been alluded to, they were seized with new alarm and consternation.

"*Hanim an diouol!*" said Reillaghan, bitterly, in Irish, "but I doubt the red-handed villain has cut short the lives of my *two* brave sons! I only hope he may stop in the counthry: I'm not widout frinds an' followers that 'ud think it no sin in a just cause to pay him in his own coin, an' to take from him an' his a pound o' blood for every ounce of ours they shed."

A number of his friends instantly volunteered to retrace their way to the mountains, and search for the other son. "There's little danger of his life," said a relation; "it's a short time Frank 'ud stand him, particularly as the gun wasn't charged. We'll go, at any rate, for fraid he might lose himself in the mountains, or walk into some o' the lochs on his way home. We had as good bring some whiskey wid us, for he may want it badly."

While they had been speaking, however, the snow began to fall, and the wind to blow in a manner that promised a heavy and violent storm. They proceeded, notwithstanding, on their search, and on whistling for the dog, discovered that he was not to be found.

"He went wid us to the mountains, I know," said the former speaker; "an' I think it likely he'll be found wid Owen, wherever he is. Come, boys, step out: it's a dismal night, any way, the Lord knows—och, och!" And with sorrowful but vigorous steps they went in quest of the missing brother.

Nothing but the preternatural character of the words which were so mysteriously pronounced immediately before Owen's pursuit of M'Kenna, could have prevented that circumstance, together with the flight of the latter, from exciting greater attention among the

crowd. His absence, however, now that they had time to reflect on it, produced unusual alarm, not only on account of M'Kenna's bad character, but from the apprehension of Owen being lost in the mountains.

The inextinguishable determination of revenge with which an Irishman pursues any person who, either directly or indirectly, takes the life of a near relation, or invades the peace of his domestic affections, was strongly illustrated by the nature of Owen's pursuit after M'Kenna, considering the appalling circumstances under which he undertook it. It is certainly more than probable that M'Kenna, instead of flying, would have defended himself with the loaded gun, had not his superstitious fears been excited by the words which so mysteriously charged him with the murder. The direction he accidentally took led both himself and his pursuer into the wildest recesses of the mountains. The chase was close and desperate, and certainly might have been fatal to Reillaghan, had M'Kenna thought of using the gun. His terror, however, exhausted him, and overcame his presence of mind to such a degree, that so far from using the weapon in his defence, he threw it aside, in order to gain ground upon his pursuer. This he did but slowly, and the pursuit was as yet uncertain. At length Owen found the distance between himself and his brother's murderer increasing; the night was dark, and he himself feeble and breathless: he therefore gave over all hope of securing him, and returned to follow those who had accompanied him to the spot where his brother's body lay. It was when retracing his path that the nature of his situation occurred to

him: the snow had not begun to fall, but the appearance of the sky was strongly calculated to depress him.

Every person knows with what remarkable suddenness snow storms descend. He had scarcely advanced homewards more than twenty minutes, when the grey tempest spread its dusky wings over the heavens, and a darker shade rapidly settled upon the white hills—now becoming indistinct in the gloom of the air, which was all in commotion, and groaned aloud with the noise of the advancing storm. When he saw the deep gloom, and felt the chilling coldness pierce his flesh so bitterly, he turned himself in the direction which led by the shortest possible cut towards his father's house. He was at this time nearly three miles from any human habitation; and as he looked into the darkness, his heart began to palpitate with an alarm almost bordering on hopelessness. His dog, which had, up till this boding change, gone on before him, now partook in his master's apprehensions, and trotted anxiously at his feet.

In the mean time the winds howled in a melancholy manner along the mountains, and carried with them from the upper clouds the rapidly descending sleet. The storm-current, too, was against him, and as the air began to work in dark confusion, he felt for the first time how utterly helpless a thing he was under the fierce tempest in this dreadful solitude.

At length the rushing sound which he first heard in the distance approached him in all its terrors; and in a short time he was staggering, like a drunken man, under the incessant drifts which swept over him

and about him. Nothing could exceed the horrors of the atmosphere at this moment. From the surface of the earth the whirlwinds swept immense snow-clouds that rose up instantaneously, and shot off along the brows and ravines of the solitary wild, sometimes descending into the vallies, and again rushing up the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains, with a speed, strength, and noise, that mocked at every thing possessing life; whilst in the air the tumult and the darkness continued to deepen in the most awful manner. The winds seemed to meet from every point of the compass, and the falling drifts flew backward and forward in every direction; the cold became intense, and Owen's efforts to advance homewards were beginning to fail. He was driven about like an autumn leaf, and his dog, which kept close to him, had nearly equal difficulty in proceeding. No sound but that of the tempest could now be heard, except the screaming of the birds as they were tossed on sidewing through the commotion which prevailed.

In this manner was Owen whirled about, till he lost all knowledge of his local situation, being ignorant whether he advanced towards home or otherwise. His mouth and eyes were almost filled with driving sleet; sometimes a cloud of light sandlike drift would almost bury him, as it crossed, or followed, or opposed his path; sometimes he would sink to the middle in a snow-wreath, from which he extricated himself with great difficulty; and among the many terrors by which he was beset, that of walking into a lake, or over a precipice, was not the least paralyzing. Owen was a young man of great personal strength and activity, for

the possession of which, next to his brother, he had been distinguished among his companions; but he now became totally exhausted; the chase after M'Kenna, his former exertion, his struggles, his repeated falls, his powerful attempts to get into the vicinity of life, the desperate strength he put forth in breaking through the vortex of the whirlwind, all had left him faint, and completely at the mercy of the elements.

The cold sleet scales were now frozen to ice on his cheeks; his clothes were completely incrusted with the hard snow, which had been beating into them by the strength of the blast, and his joints were getting stiff and benumbed. The tumult of the tempest, the whirling of the snow clouds, and the thick snow, now falling, and again tossed upwards by sudden gusts to the sky, deprived him of all power of reflection, and rendered him, though not altogether blind or deaf, yet incapable of forming any distinct opinion upon what he saw or heard. Still, actuated by the unconscious principle of self-preservation, he tottered on, cold, feeble, and breathless, now driven back like a reed by the strong rush of the storm, or prostrated almost to suffocation under the whirlwinds, that started up like savage creatures of life about him.

During all this time his faithful dog never abandoned him; but his wild howlings only heightened the horrors of his situation. When he fell, the affectionate creature would catch the flap of his coat, or his arm, in his teeth, and attempt to raise him; and as long as his master had presence of mind, with the unerring certainty of instinct, he would turn him,

when taking a wrong direction, into that which led homewards.

Owen was not, however, reduced to this state without experiencing sensations of which no language could convey adequate notions. At first he struggled heroically with the storm; but when utter darkness threw its impervious shades over the desolation around him, and the fury of the elements grew so tremendous, all the strong propensities to life became roused, the convulsive throes of a young heart on the steep of death threw a wild and corresponding energy into his vigorous frame, and occasioned him to cling to existence with a tenacity rendered still stronger by the terrible consciousness of his unprepared state, and the horror of being plunged into eternity, unsupported by the rites of his church, whilst the crime of attempting to take away human life lay on his soul. Those domestic affections, too, which in Irishmen are so strong, became excited; his home, his fireside, the faces of his kindred, already impressed with affliction for the death of one brother, and the mild countenance of the fair girl to whom he was about to be united, were conjured up in the powerful imagery of natural feeling, the fountains of which were opened in his heart, and his agonizing cry for life rose wildly from the mountain desert upon the voice of the tempest. Then, indeed, when the gulf of a two-fold death yawned before him, did the struggling spirit send up its shrieking prayer to heaven with desperate impulse. These struggles, however, as well as those of the body, became gradually weaker as the storm tossed him about, and with the chill of its breath withered him

into total helplessness. He reeled on, stiff and insensible, without knowing whither he went, falling with every blast, and possessing scarcely any faculty of life except mere animation.

After about an hour, however, the storm subsided, and the clouds broke away into light fleecy columns before the wind; the air, too, became less cold, and the face of nature more visible. The driving sleet and hard granular snow now ceased to fall; but were succeeded by large feathery flakes, that descended slowly upon the still air.

Had this trying scene lasted much longer, Owen must soon have been a stiffened corse. The child-like strength, however, which just enabled him to bear up without sinking in despair to die, now supported him when there was less demand for energy. The dog, too, by rubbing itself against him, and licking his face, enabled him, by a last effort, to recollect himself, so as to have a glimmering perception of his situation. His confidence returned, and with it a greater degree of strength. He shook, as well as he could, the snow from his clothes, where it had accumulated heavily, and felt himself able to proceed, slowly it is true, towards his father's house, which he had nearly reached when he met his friends, who were once more hurrying out to the mountains in quest of him, having been compelled to return, in consequence of the storm, when they had first set out. The whiskey, their companionship, and their assistance soon revived him. One or two were dispatched home before them, to apprize the afflicted family of his safety; and the intelligence was hailed with melancholy joy

by the Reillaghans. A faint light played for a moment over the gloom which had settled among them, but it was brief; for on ascertaining the safety of their second son, their grief rushed back with renewed violence, and nothing could be heard but the voice of sorrow and affliction.

Darby More, who had assumed the control of the family, did every thing in his power to console them; his efforts, however, were viewed with a feeling little short of indignation.

"Darby," said the afflicted mother, "you have, undher God, in some sinse, my fair son's death to account for. You had a dhrame, but you wouldn't tell it to us. If you had, my boy might be livin' this day, for it would be asy for him to be an his guard."

"Musha, poor woman," replied Darby, "sure you don't know, you afflicted crathur, what you're spakin' about. Tell my dhrame! Why, thin, it's myself towld it to him from beginnin' to ind, and that whin we wor goin' to mass this day itself. I desired him, on the paril of his life, not to go out a tracin', or toards the mountains, good or bad."

"You said you had a prayer that 'ud keep it back," observed the mother, "an' why didn't you say it?"

"I did say it," replied Darby, "an' that afore a bit crassed my throath this mornin'; but, you see he broke his promise of not goin' to the mountains, an' *that* was what made the dhrame come thrue."

"Well, well, Darby, I beg your pardon, an' God's pardon, for judgin' you in the wrong. Oh, wurraw sthrue! my brave son, is it there you're lyin' wid us, avourneen machree!" and she again renewed her grief.

"Oh, thin, I'm sure I forgive you," said Darby; "but keep your grief in for a start, till I say the *De prowhinjis* over him, for the pace an' repose of his sowl. Kneel down all of yees."

He repeated this prayer in language which it would require one of Edward Irving's adepts in the unknown tongues to interpret. When he had recited about the half of it, Owen, and those who had gone to seek him, entered the house, and, after the example of the others, reverently knelt down until he finished it.

Owen's appearance once more renewed their grief. The body of his brother had been removed to a bed beyond the fire in the kitchen; and when Owen looked upon the features of his beloved companion, he approached, and stooped down to kiss his lips. He was still too feeble, however, to bend by his own strength; and it is also probable that the warm air of the house relaxed him. Be this, however, as it may, he fell forward, but supported himself by his hands, which were placed upon the body; a deep groan was heard, and the apparently dead man opened his eyes, and feebly exclaimed—"a dhrink! a dhrink!"

Darby More had, on concluding the *De profundis*, seated himself beside the bed on which Mike lay; but on hearing the groan, and the call for drink, he leaped rapidly to his legs, and exclaimed, "My sowl to hell an' the divil, Owen Reillaghan, but your son's alive!! Off wid two or three of yees, as hard as the divil can dhrive yees, for the priest an' docthor!! Off wid yees! ye damned lazy spalpeens, aren't ye near there by this? Give us my cant! Are yees gone? Oh, by this an' by that—hell—eh—aren't yees

gone?" but ere he could finish the sentence they had set out.

"Now," he exclaimed, in a voice whose tremendous tones were strongly at variance with his own injunctions—"Now, neighbours, d——n yees, keep silence. Mrs. Reillaghan, get a bottle of whiskey an' a mug o' wather .Make haste. *Hanim an diouol!* don't be all night!"

The poor mother, however, could not stir; the unexpected revulsion of feeling which she had so suddenly experienced was more than she could sustain. A long fainting fit was the consequence, and Darby's commands were obeyed by the wife of a friendly neighbour.

The mendicant immediately wetted Mike's lips, and poured some spirits, copiously diluted with water, down his throat; after which he held the whiskey bottle, like a connoisseur, between himself and the light. "I hope," said he, "this whiskey is the ra-al crathur." He put the bottle to his mouth as he spoke, and on holding it a second time before his eye, he shook his head complacently—"Ay," said he, "if any thing could bring the dead back to this world, my sowl to glory, but *that* would. Oh, thin, it would give the dead life, sure enough!" He put it once more to his lips, from which it was not separated without relinquishing a considerable portion of its contents.

"*Dhea Grashthias!*" he exclaimed; "throth, I find myself the betther o' that sup, in regard that it's good for this touch o' configuration that I'm throubled wid inwardly! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis! Amin!" These words he spoke in a low, placid voice, lest the

wounded man might be discomposed by his observations.

The rapidity with which the account of Mike's restoration to life spread among the neighbours was surprising. Those who had gone for the priest and doctor communicated it to all they met, and these again to others: so that in a short time the house was surrounded by great numbers of their acquaintances, all anxious to hear the particulars more minutely. Darby, who never omitted an opportunity of impressing the people with a belief in his own sanctity, and in that of his crucifix, came out among them, and answered their inquires by a solemn shake of his head, and a mysterious indication of his finger to the crucifix, but said nothing more. This was enough. The murmur of reverence and wonder spread among them, and ere long there were few present who did not believe that Reillaghan had been restored to life by a touch of Darby's crucifix; an opinion which is not wholly exploded until this day.

Peggy Gartland, who, fortunately, had not heard the report of her lover's death until it was contradicted by the account of his revival, now entered, and by her pale countenance betrayed strong symptoms of affection and sympathy. She sat by his side, gazing mournfully on his features, and with difficulty suppressed her tears.

For some time before her arrival, the mother and sisters of Mike had been removed to another room, lest the tumultuous expression of their mingled joy and sorrow might disturb him. The fair artless girl, although satisfied that he still lived, entertained no

hopes of his recovery; but she ventured, in a low, trembling voice, to inquire from Darby some particulars of the melancholy transaction which was likely to deprive her of her betrothed husband.

"Where did the shot sthrike him, Darby?"

"Clane through the body, a villish; jist where Captain Cramer was shot at the battle o' Bunker's Hill, where he lay as good as dead for twelve hours, an' was near bein' berrid a *corp*, an' him alive all the time, only that as they were pullin' him off o' the cart, he gev a shout, an' thin, *a colleen dhas*, they began to think he might be livin' still. Sure enough, he was, too, an' lived successfully, till he died wid dhrinkin' brandy, as a cure for the gout; the Lord be praised!"

"Where's the villain, Darby?"

"He's in the mountains, no doubt, where he had thim to fight wid that's a match for him—God, an' the dark storm that fell a while agone. *They'll* pay him, never fear, for his thrachery to the noble boy that chastised him for your sake *acushla oge!* Sthrong was your hand, *a Veehal*, an' ginerous was your affectionate heart; an' well you loved the fair girl that's sittin' beside you! Throth, Peggy, my heart's black wid sarrow about the darlin' young man. Still life's in him; an' while there's life there's hope; glory be to God!"

The eulogium of the pilgrim, who was, in truth, much attached to Mike, moved the heart of the affectionate girl, whose love and sympathy were pure as the dew on the grass-blade, and now as easily affected by the slightest touch. She remained silent for a time, but secretly glided her hand towards that of her

lover, which she clasped in hers, and by a gentle and timid pressure, strove to intimate to him that she was beside him. Long but unavailing, was the struggle to repress her sorrow: her bosom heaved; she gave two or three loud sobs, and burst into tears and lamentations.

"Don't cry, avourneen," whispered Darby—"Don't cry; I'll warrant you, that Darby More will ate share of your weddin' dinner an' his, yit. There's a small taste of colour comin' to his face, which, I think, undher God, is owin' to my touchin' him wid the cruciwhix. Don't cry, a colleen, he'll get over it, an' more than it, yit, a colleen bawn!"

Darby then hurried her into the room where Mike's mother and sisters were. On entering she threw herself into the arms of the former, laid her face on her bosom, and wept bitterly. This renewed the mother's grief: she clasped the interesting girl in a sorrowful embrace; so did his sisters. They threw themselves into each other's arms, and poured forth those touching, but wild bursts of pathetic language, which are never heard but when the heart is struck by some desolating calamity.

"Husht!" said a neighbouring man who was present; "husht! it's a shame for yees, an' the boy not dead yit."

"I'm not ashamed," said Peggy: "why should I be ashamed of bein' sarry for the likes of Mike Reillaghan? Where was his aquil? Wasn't all hearts upon him? Didn't the very poor on the road bless him whin he passed? Who ever had a bad word agin him, but the villain that murdhered him? Mur-

dhered him! Heaven above me! an' why? For *my* sake! For my sake the pride o' the parish is laid low! Ashamed! Is it for cryin' for my bethrothed husband, that was sworn to me, an' I to him, before the eye of God above us? This day week I was to be his bride; an' now—now——Oh, Vread Reillaghan, take me to you! Let me go to his mother! My heart's broke, Vread Reillaghan! Let me go to her: nobody's grief for him is like ours. You're his mother, an' I'm his wife in the sight o' God. Proud was I out of him: my eyes brightened when they seen him, an' my heart got light when I heard his voice; an' now what's afore me?—what's afore me but sorrowful days an' a broken heart!"

Mrs. Reillaghan placed her tenderly and affectionately beside her, on the bed whereon she herself sat. With the corner of her handkerchief she wiped the tears from the weeping girl, although her own flowed fast. Her daughters, also, gathered about her, and, in language of the most endearing kind, endeavoured to soothe and console her.

"He may live yet, Peggy, avourneen," said his mother: "my brave an' noble son may live yet, an' you may be both happy. Don't be cryin' so much, *asthore galh machree*;* sure he's in the hands o' God, avourneen; an' your young heart won't be broke I hope. Och, the Lord pity her young feelins!" exclaimed the mother, affected even by the consolation she offered to the betrothed bride of her son: "is it any wondher she'd sink undher sich a blow! for, sure enough, where was the likes of him? No, asthore;

* The beloved white (girl) of my heart.

it's no wondher—it's no wondher! Lonesome will your heart be widout him; for I know what he'd feel if a hair of *your* head was injured."

"Oh, I know it—I know it! There was music in his voice, an' *grah** an' kindness to every crathur an God's earth; but to me—to me—oh, no one knew his love to me, but myself an' God. Oh, if I was dead, that I couldn't feel this, or if my life could save his! Why didn't the villain—the black villain, wid God's curse upon him—why didn't he shoot *me*, thin I could never be Mike's wife, an' his hand o' murdher might be satisfied? If he had, I wouldn't feel as I do. Ay; the warmest, an' the best, an' the dearest blood of my heart, I could shed for him. That heart was his, an' he had a right to it. Our love wasn't of yistherday: afore the links of my hair came to my showldhers I loved him, an' thought of him; an' many a time he tould me that I was his first! God knows he was my first, an' he will be my last, let him live or die."

"Well, but, Peggy achora," said his sister, "maybe it's sinful to be cryin' this a way, an' he not dead."

"God forgive me, if it's a sin," replied Peggy; "I'd not wish to do any thing sinful or displasin' to God; an' I'll sthrive to keep down my grief: I will, as well as I can."

She put her hands on her face, and by an effort of firmness, subdued the tone of her grief to a low continuous murmur of sorrow.

"An' along wid that," said the sister, "maybe the

* Affection.

noise is disturbin' him. Darby put us all out o' the kitchen, to have pace an' quietness about him."

"An' 'twas well thought o' Darby," she replied, "an' may the blessin' o' God rest upon him for it! A male's mate, or a night's lodgin' he'll never want undher my father's roof for that goodness to *him*. I'll be quiet thin."

There was now a short pause, during which those in the room heard a smack, accompanied by the words, "*Dheah Grashthias!* Throth I'm the betther o' that sup, so I am. Nothin' keeps this thief of a configuration down but it. *Dheah Grashthias* for that! Oh, thin this *is* the stuff! It warms a body to the tops o' the nails!"

"Don't spare it, Darby," said old Reillaghan, "if it does you good."

"Avourneen," said Darby, "it's only what gives me a little relief I ever take, *jist by way of cure*, for it's the only thing does me good, when I am this-a-way."

Several persons in the neighbourhood were, in the mean time, flocking to Reillaghan's house. A worthy man, accompanied by his wife, entered as the pilgrim had concluded. The woman, in accordance with the custom of the country, raised the Irish cry, in a loud melancholy wail, that might be heard at a great distance.

Darby, who prided himself on maintaining silence, could not preserve the consistency of his character upon this occasion, any more than on that of Mike's recent symptoms of life.

"Your sowl to the divil, you faggot!" he exclaimed,

" what do you mane? The divil whip the tongue out o' you, are you goin' to come here only to disturb the boy that's not dead yet. Get out o' this, or be asy wid your skhreechin', or by the crass that died for us, only you're a woman, I'd tumble you wid a lick o' my cant. Keep asy, you vagrant, an' the dacent boy not dead yet. Hell bellows you, what do you mane?"

" Not dead!" exclaimed the woman, with her body bent in the proper attitude, her hands extended, and the crying face turned with amazement to Darby. " Not dead! Wurrah, man alive, isn't he murdhered?"

" Hell resave the matther for that!" replied Darby. " I tell you, he's livin', an' will live, I hope, barrin' your skirlin' dhrives the life that's in him out of him. Go into the room there to the women, an' make yourself scarce out o' this, or by the padareens about me, I'll malivogue you."

" We can't be angry wid the dacent woman," observed old Reillaghan, " in regard that she came to show her friendship and respect."

" I'd be angry wid St. Pether," said Darby, " an' 'ud not scruple to give him a lick o' my c—— Lord presarve us! what was I goin' to say! Why, throth, I believe the little wits I had are all gone a shaughran! I must fast a Friday or two for the same words agin St. Pether. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin."

Hope is strong in love and in life. Peggy, now that grief had eased her heart of its load of accumulated sorrow, began to reflect upon Darby's anecdote of Captain Cramer, which she related to those about her. They all rejoiced to hear that it was possible to

be wounded so severely and live. They also consoled and supported each other, and expressed their trust that Mike might also recover. The opinion of the doctor was waited for with such anxiety as a felon feels when the foreman of the jury hands down the verdict which consigns him to life or death.

Whether Darby's prescription was the result of chance or sagacity we know not. We are bound, however, to declare that Reillaghan's strength was in some degree restored, although the pain he suffered amounted to torture. The surgeon (who was also a physician, and, moreover, supplied his own medicines) and the priest, as they lived in the same town, both arrived together. The latter administered the rites of his church to him; and the former, who was a skilful man, left nothing undone to accomplish his restoration to health. He had been shot through the body with a *bullet*—a circumstance which was not known until the arrival of the surgeon. This gentleman expressed much astonishment at his surviving the wound, but said that circumstances of a similar nature had occurred, particularly on the field of battle, although he admitted that they were few.

Darby, however, who resolved to have something like a decided opinion from him, without at all considering whether such a thing was possible, pressed him strongly upon the point.

"Arrah, blur-an-ager, Docthor Swither, say one thing or other. Is he to live or die? Plain talk Docthor, is all we want, an' no *feasthalagh*."*

"The bullet, I am inclined to think," replied the

* Nonsense.

Doctor, " must either not have touched a vital part, or touched it only slightly. I have known cases similar, it is true; but it is impossible for me to pronounce a decisive opinion upon him just now."

" The divil resave the yarrib* ever I'll gather for you agin, so long as my name's Darby More, except you say either 'life' or 'death,'" said Darby, who forgot his character of sanctity altogether.

" Darby, achora," said Mrs. Reillaghan, " don't crass the gintleman, an' him sthrivin' to do his best. Here, Paddy Gormly, bring some wather till the docthor washes his hands."

" Darby," replied the Doctor, to whom he was well known, " you are a good herbalist, but even although you should not serve me as usual in that capacity, yet I cannot say exactly either life or death. The case is too critical a one; but I do not despair, Darby, if that will satisfy you."

" More power to you, Docthor, achora. Hell-an-age, where's that bottle? bring it here. Thank you, Vread. Docthor, here's wishin' you all happiness, an' may you set Mike on his legs wanst more! See, Docthor—see, man alive—look at this purty girl here, wid her wet cheeks; give her some hope, ahagur, if you can; keep the crathur's spirits up, an' I'll furnish you wid every yarrib in Europe, from the nettle to the rose."

" Don't despair, my good girl," said the Doctor, addressing Peggy, " I hope, I trust, that he may recover, but he must be kept easy and quiet."

" May the blessing of God, Sir, light down on you

* Herb.

for the same words," replied Peggy, in a voice tremulous with gratitude and joy.

"Are you done wid him, Docthor?" said old Reillaghan.

"At present," replied the Doctor, "I can do nothing more for him; but I shall see him early to-morrow morning."

"Bekase, Sir," continued the worthy man, "here's Darby More, who's afflicted wid a conflamboration, or some sich thing, inwardly, an' if you could ase him, Sir, I'd pay the damages, whatever they might be."

The Doctor smiled slightly. "Darby's complaint," said he, "is beyond my practice; there is but one cure for it, and that is, if I have any skill, a little of what's in the bottle here, taken, as our prescriptions sometimes say, 'when the patient is inclined for it.'"

"By my sou—sanctity, Docthor," said Darby, "you're a man o' skill, any how, an' that's well known, Sir. Nothin', as Father Hoolaghan says, but the sup o' whiskey does this sarra of a configuration good. It rises the wind off o' my stomach, Docthor!"

"It does, Darby, it does. Now let all be peace and quietness," continued the Doctor: "take away a great part of this fire, and don't attempt to remove him to any other bed until I desire you. I shall call again to-morrow morning early."

The doctor's attention to his patient was unremitting; every thing that human skill, joined to long experience and natural talent, could do to restore the young man to his family was done; and in the course of a few weeks the friends of Reillaghan had the satisfaction of seeing him completely out of danger.

Mike declared after his recovery, that though incapable of motion on the mountains, he was not altogether insensible to what passed around him. The loud tones of their conversation he could hear. The oath which young M'Kenna uttered in a voice so wild and exalted, fell clearly on his ear, and he endeavoured to contradict it, in order that he might be secured and punished in the event of his death. He also said, that the pain he suffered in the act of being conveyed home, occasioned him to groan feebly; but that the sobs, and cries, and loud conversation of those who surrounded him, prevented his moans from being heard. It is probable, after all, that were it not for the accidental fall of Owen upon his body, he might not have survived the wound, inasmuch as the medical skill, which contributed to restore him, would not have been called in.

Though old Frank M'Kenna and his family felt an oppressive load of misery taken off their hearts by the prospect of Reillaghan's recovery, yet it was impossible for them to be insensible to the fate of their son, knowing as they did, that he must have been out among the mountains during the storm. His unhappy mother and Rody sat up the whole night, expecting his return, but morning arrived without bringing him home. For six days afterwards the search for him was general and strict; his friends and neighbours traversed the mountain wastes until they left scarcely an acre of them unexplored. On the sixth day there came a thaw, and towards the close of the seventh, he was found a "stiffened corse," *upon the very spot where he had shot his rival*, and on which

he had challenged the Almighty to stretch him in death, without priest or prayer, if he were guilty of the crime with which he had been charged. He was found lying with a circle drawn round him, his head pillowed upon the innocent blood which he had shed with the intention of murder, and a bloody cross marked upon his breast and forehead. It was thought that in the dread of approaching death he had formed it with his hand, which came accidentally in contact with the blood that lay in clots about him.

The manner of his death excited a profound and wholesome feeling among the people, with respect to the crime which he attempted to commit. The circumstances attending it, and his oath upon the spot where he shot Reillaghan, are still spoken of by the fathers of the neighbouring villages, and even by some who were present at the search for his body. It was also doubly remarkable on account of a case of spectral illusion which it produced, and which was ascribed to the effect of M'Kenna's supernatural appearance at the time. The daughter of a herdsman in the mountains was strongly affected by the spectacle of his dead body borne past her father's door. In about a fortnight afterwards, she assured her family that he appeared to her. She saw the apparition, in the beginning, only at night; but ere long it ventured, as she imagined, to appear in day-light. Many imaginary conversations took place between them; and the fact of the peasantry flocking to the herd's house, to satisfy themselves as to the truth of the rumour, is yet well remembered in the parish. It was also affirmed, that as the funeral of M'Kenna passed to the church-

yard, a hare crossed it, which some one present struck on the side with a stone. The hare, says the tradition, was not injured, but the sound of the stroke resembled that produced on striking an empty barrel.

We have nearly wound up our story, in which we have feebly endeavoured to illustrate scenes that were, some time ago, not unusual in Irish life. There is little more to be added, except that Mike Reillaghan almost miraculously recovered; that he and Peggy Gartland were happily married, and that Darby More lost his character as a dreamer in that part of the parish. Mike, with whom, however, he still continued a favourite, used frequently to allude to the *speaking crucifix*, the dream aforesaid, and his bit of fiction, in assuring his mother that he had dissuaded him against "tracing" on that eventful day.

"Well, avourneen," Darby would exclaim, "the holiest of us has our failins; but, in throth, the truth of it is, that myself didn't know what I was sayin', I was so *through other*;* for I remimber that I was badly afflicted wid this thief of a configuration inwardly at the time. That, you see, an' your own throubles, put my mind *ashaughran* for a start. But, upon my sanctity,—an' sure that's a great oath wid *me*—only for the Holy Carol you bought from me the night before, an' above all, touchin' you wid the blessed Crucifix, you'd never a' got over the same accident. Oh, you may smile an' shake your head, but it's thruth whether or not! Glory be to God!"

The priest of the parish, on ascertaining correctly the incidents mentioned in this sketch, determined to

* Agitated.

deprive the people of at least one pretext for their licentiousness. He represented the abuses connected with such a ceremony to the bishop; and from that night to the present time, the inhabitants of Kilnaheery never had, in their own parish, an opportunity of hearing a Midnight Mass.

THE DONAGH;

OR,

THE HORSE STEALERS.

THE DONAGH;

OR,

THE HORSE STEALERS.

Carnmore, one of those small villages that are to be found in the outskirts of many parishes in Ireland, whose distinct boundaries are lost in the contiguous mountain-wastes, was situated at the foot of a deep gorge, or pass, overhung by two bleak hills, from the naked sides of which the storm swept over it, without discomposing the peaceful little nook of cabins that stood below. About a furlong farther down were two or three farm-houses, inhabited by a family named Cassidy, men of simple, inoffensive manners, and considerable wealth. They were, however, acute and wise in their generation; intelligent cattle-dealers, on whom it would have been a matter of some difficulty to impose an unsound horse, or a cow older than was intimated by her horn-rings, even when conscientiously dressed up for sale by the ingenious aid of the file or burning-iron. Between their houses and the hamlet rose a conical pile of rocks, loosely heaped together, from which the place took its name of Carnmore.

About three years before the time of this story, there came two men with their families to reside in the upper village, and the house which they chose as a residence was one at some distance from those which composed the little group we have just been describing. They said their name was Meehan, although the general report went, that this was not true; that the name was an assumed one, and that some dark mystery, which none could penetrate, shrouded their history and character. They were certainly remarkable men. The elder, named Anthony, was a dark, black-browed person, stern in his manner, and atrociously cruel in his disposition. His form was Herculean, his bones strong and hard as iron, and his sinews stood out in undeniable evidence of a life hitherto spent in severe toil and exertion, to bear which he appeared to an amazing degree capable. His brother Denis was a small man, less savage and daring in his character, and consequently more vacillating and cautious than Anthony; for the points in which he resembled him were superinduced upon his natural disposition by the close connexion that subsisted between them, and by the identity of their former pursuits in life, which, beyond doubt, had been such as could not bear investigation.

The old proverb of "birds of a feather flock together," is certainly a true one, and in this case it was once more verified. Before the arrival of these men in the village, there had been five or six bad characters in the neighbourhood, whose delinquencies were pretty well known. With these persons the strangers, by that sympathy which assimilates with congenial

good or evil, soon became acquainted; and although their intimacy was as secret and cautious as possible, still it had been observed, and was known; for they had frequently been seen skulking together at day-break, or in the dusk of evening.

It is unnecessary to say, that Meehan and his brother did not mingle much in the society of Carnmore. In fact, the villagers and they mutually avoided each other. A mere return of the common phrases of salutation was generally the most that passed between them: they never entered into that familiarity which leads to mutual intercourse, and justifies one neighbour in freely entering the cabin of another, to spend a winter's night, or a summer's evening, in amusing conversation. Few had ever been in the house of the Meehans since it became theirs; nor were the means of their subsistence known. They led an idle life, had no scarcity of food, were decently clothed, and never wanted money; circumstances which occasioned no small degree of conjecture in Carnmore and its vicinity.

Some said they lived by theft; others that they were coiners; and there were many who imagined, from the diabolical countenance of the elder brother, that he had sold himself to the devil, who, they affirmed, set his mark upon him, and was his paymaster. Upon this hypothesis several were ready to prove that he had neither breath nor shadow: they had seen him, they said, standing under a hedge-row of *elder*—that unholy tree which furnished wood for the cross, and on which Judas hanged himself—yet, although it was noon-day in the month of July, his

person threw out no shadow. Worthy souls! because the man stood in the shade at the time. But with these simple explanations superstition had nothing to do, although we are bound in justice to the reverend old lady to affirm that she was kept exceedingly busy in Carnmore. If a man had a sick cow, she was elf-shot; if his child became consumptive, it had been overlooked, or received *a blast* from the fairies; if the hooping-cough was rife, all the afflicted children were put three times under an ass; or when they happened to have the "mumps," were led before sunrise, to a south-running stream, with a halter hanging about their necks, under an obligation of silence during the ceremony. In short, there could not possibly be a more superstitious spot than that which these men of mystery had selected for their residence. Another circumstance which caused the people to look upon them with additional dread, was their neglect of mass on Sundays and holidays, though they avowed themselves Roman Catholics. They did not, it is true, join in the dances, drinking-matches, foot-ball, and other sports with which the Carnmore folk celebrated the Lord's day; but they scrupled not, on the other hand, to mend their garden-ditch, or mould a row of cabbages on the Sabbath—a circumstance for which two or three of the Carnmore boys were, one Sunday evening when tipsy, well-nigh chastising them. Their usual manner, however, of spending that day was by sauntering lazily about the fields, or stretching themselves supinely on the sunny side of the hedges, their arms folded into their bosoms, and their hats lying over their faces to keep off the sun.

In the mean time, loss of property was becoming quite common in the neighbourhood. Sheep were stolen from the farmers, and cows and horses from the more extensive graziers in the parish. The complaints against the authors of these depredations were loud and incessant: watches were set, combinations for mutual security formed, and subscriptions to a considerable amount entered into, with a hope of being able, by the temptation of a large reward, to work upon the weakness or cupidity of some accomplice to betray the gang of villains who infested the neighbourhood. All, however, was in vain; every week brought some new act of plunder to light, perpetrated upon such unsuspecting persons as had hitherto escaped the notice of the robbers; but no trace could be discovered of the perpetrators. Although theft had from time to time been committed upon a small scale before the arrival of the Meehans in the village, yet it was undeniable that since that period the instances not only multiplied, but became of a more daring and extensive description. They arose in a gradual scale from the hen-roost to the stable; and with such ability were they planned and executed, that the people, who in every instance identified Meehan and his brother with them, began to believe and hint that, in consequence of their compact with the devil, they had power to render themselves invisible. Common fame, who can best treat such subjects, took up this, and never laid it aside until, by narrating several exploits which Meehan the elder was said to have performed in other parts of the kingdom, she wound it up by roundly informing the Carnmorians, that, having been once

taken prisoner for murder, he was caught by the leg, when half through a hedge, but that, being most wickedly determined to save his neck, he left the leg with the officer who took him, shouting out that it was a new species of leg-bail; and yet he moved away with surprising speed, upon two of as good legs as any man in his majesty's dominions might wish to walk off upon, from the insinuating advances of a bailiff or a constable!

The family of the Meehans consisted of their wives and three children, two boys and a girl; the former were the offspring of the younger brother, and the latter of Anthony. It has been observed, with truth and justice, that there is no man, how hardened and diabolical soever in his natural temper, who does not exhibit to some particular object a peculiar species of affection. Such a man was Anthony Meehan. That sullen hatred which he bore to human society, and that inherent depravity of heart which left the trail of vice and crime upon his footsteps, were flung off his character when he addressed his daughter Anne. To him her voice was like music; to her he was not the reckless villain, treacherous and cruel, which the helpless and unsuspecting found him; but a parent kind and indulgent as ever pressed an only and beloved daughter to his bosom. Anne was handsome: had she been born and educated in an elevated rank in society, she would have been softened by the polish and luxury of life into perfect beauty: she was, however, utterly without education. As Anne experienced from her father no unnatural cruelty, no harshness, nor even indifference, she consequently loved him in

return; for she knew that tenderness from *such* a man was a proof of parental love rarely to be found in life. Perhaps she loved not her father the less on perceiving that he was proscribed by the world; a circumstance which might also have enhanced in his eyes the affection she bore him. When Meehan came to Carnmore, she was sixteen; and, as that was three years before the incident occurred on which we have founded this narrative, the reader may now suppose her to be about nineteen; an interesting country girl as to person, but with a mind completely neglected, yet remarkable for an uncommon stock of good-nature and credulity.

About the hour of eleven o'clock, one winter's night in the beginning of December, Meehan and his brother sat moodily at their hearth. The fire was of peat which had recently been put down, and, from between the turf, the ruddy blaze was shooting out in those little tongues and gusts of sober light, which throw around the rural hearth one of those charms which make up the felicity of domestic life. The night was stormy, and the wind moaned and howled along the dark hills beneath which the cottage stood. Every object in the house was shrouded in a mellow shade, which afforded to the eye no clear outline, except around the hearth alone, where the light brightened into a golden hue, giving the idea of calmness and peace. Anthony Meehan sat on one side of it, and his daughter opposite him, knitting: before the fire sat Denis, drawing shapes in the ashes for his own amusement.

"Bless me," said he, "how sthrange it is!"

"What is?" inquired Anthony, in his deep and grating tones.

"Why, thin, it *is* sthrange!" continued the other, who, despite of the severity of his brother, was remarkably superstitious—"a coffin I made in the ashes three times runnin'! Isn't it very quare, Anne?" he added, addressing the niece.

"Sthrange enough, of a sartinty," she replied, being unwilling to express before her father the alarm which the incident, slight as it was, created in her mind; for she, like her uncle, was subject to such ridiculous influences. "How did it happen, uncle?"

"Why, thin, no way in life, Anne; only, as I was thryin' to make a shoe, it turned out a coffin on my hands. I thin smoothed the ashes, and began agin, an' sorra bit of it but was a coffin still. Well, says I, I'll give you another chance,—here goes once more; —an', as sure as a gun's iron, it was a coffin the third time! Heaven be about us, it's odd enough!"

"It would be little matther you were nailed down in a coffin," replied Anthony, fiercely; "the world would have little loss. What a pitiful, cowardly rascal you are! Afraid o' your own shadow afther the sun goes down, except *I'm* at your elbow! Can't you dhrive all them palavers out o' your head? Didn't the sargint tell us, an' prove to us, the time we broke the guard-house, an' took Frinch lave o' the ridgment for good, that the whole o' that, an' more along wid it, is all priestcraft?"

"I remimber he did, sure enough: I dunna where the same sargint is now, Tony? About no good, any way, I'll be bail. Howsomever, in regard o' that,

why doesn't yourself give up fastin' from the mate of a Friday?"

"Do you want me to sthretch you on the hearth?" replied the savage, whilst his eyes kindled into fury, and his grim visage darkened into a satanic expression. "I'll tache you to be puttin' me through my catechiz about atin' mate. I may manage that as I plase; it comes at first-cost, any how: but no cross-questions to me about it, if you regard your health!"

"I must say for you," replied Denis, reproachfully, "that you're a good warrant to put the health astray upon us of an odd start: we're not come to this time o' day widout carryin' somethin' to remimber you by. For my own part, Tony, I don't like such tokens; an' moreover, I wish you had resaved a thrifle o' larnin', espishily in the writin' line; for whenever we have any difference, you're so ready to prove your opinion by settin' your mark upon me, that I'd rather, fifty times over, you could write it with pen an' ink."

"My father will give that up, uncle," said the niece; "it's bad for any body to be fightin', but worst of all for brothers, that ought to live in peace and kindness. Won't you, father?"

"Maybe I will, dear, some o' these days, on your account, Anne; but you must get this creature of an uncle of yours to let me alone, an' not be aggravatin' me with his folly. As for your mother, she's worse; her tongue's sharp enough to skin a flint, and a batin' a day has little effect on her."

Anne sighed, for she knew how low an irreligious life, and the infamous society with which, as her fa-

ther's wife, her mother was compelled to mingle, had degraded her.

"Well but, Father, you don't set her a good example yourself," said Anne; "and if she scoulds and drinks *now*, you know she was a different woman when you got her. You allow this yourself; and the crathur, the dhrunkest time she is, doesn't she cry bittherly, remimberin' what she *has* been. Instead of *one* batin' a day, father, thry *no* batin' a day, an' may be it'ill turn out betther than thumpin' an' smashin' her, as you do."

"Why, thin, there's thruth an' sinse in what the girl says, Tony," observed Denis.

"Come," replied Anthony, "whatever *she* may say, I'll suffer none of *your* interference. Go an' get us the black bottle from the *place;* it'll soon be time to move. I hope *they* won't stay too long."

Denis obeyed this command with great readiness, for whiskey in some degree blunted the fierce passions of his brother, and deadened his cruelty; or rather diverted it from minor objects to those which occurred in the lawless perpetration of his villany.

The bottle was got, and in the mean time the fire blazed up brightly; the storm without, however, did not abate, nor did Meehan and his brother wish that it should. As the elder of them took the glass from the hands of the other, an air of savage pleasure blazed in his eyes, on reflecting that the tempest of the night was favourable to the execution of the villanous deed on which they were bent.

"More power to you!" said Anthony, impiously personifying the storm: "sure that's *one* proof that

God doesn't throuble his head about what we do, or we would not get such a murtherin' fine night as is in it, any how. That's it! blow an' tundher away, an' keep yourself an' us as black as hell, sooner than we should fail in what we intind! Anne, your health, acushla!—Yours, Dinny! If you keep your tongue off o' me, I'll neither make nor meddle in regard o' the batin' o' you."

"I hope you'll stick to that, any how," replied Denis; "for my part I'm sick and sore o' you every day in the year. Many another man would put salt wather between himself and yourself, sooner nor become a battin'-stone for you, as I have been. Few would bear it, when they could mend themselves."

"What's that you say?" replied Anthony, suddenly laying down his glass, catching his brother by the collar, and looking him with a murderous scowl in the face. "Is it thrachery you hint at?—eh? Sarpent, is it thrachery you mane?" and as he spoke, he compressed Denis's neck between his powerful hands, until the other was black in the face.

Anne flew to her uncle's assistance, and with much difficulty succeeded in rescuing him from the deadly gripe of her father, who exclaimed, as he loosed his hold, "You may thank the girl, or you'd not spake, nor dare to spake, about crossin' the salt-wather, or lavin' me in a desateful way agin. If I ever suspect that a thought of thrachery comes into your heart, I'll *do* for you; and you may carry your story to the world I'll send you to."

"Father dear, why are you so suspicious of my uncle?" said Anne; "sure he's a long time livin'

with you, an' goin' step for step in all the danger you meet with. If he had a mind to turn out a Judas agin you, he might a done it long agone; not to mintion the throuble it would bring on his own head, seein' he's as deep in every thing as you are."

"If that's all that's throubling you," replied Denis, trembling, "you may make yourself asy on the head of it; but well I know 'tisn't *that* that's on your mind; 'tis your own conscience; but sure it's not fair nor rasonable for you to vent your evil thoughts on me!"

"Well, he won't," said Anne, "he'll quit it; his mind's throubled; an', dear knows, it's no wondher it should. Och, I'd give the world wide that his conscience was lightened of the load that's upon it! My mother's lameness is nothin'; but the child, poor thing! An' it was only widin three days of her lyin'-in. Och, it was a cruel sthroke, father! An' when I seen its little innocent face, dead, an' me widout a brother, I thought my heart would break, thinkin' upon who did it!" The tears fell in showers from her eyes, as she added, "Father, I don't want to vex you; but I wish you to feel sorrow for *that* at laste. Oh, if you'd bring the priest, an' give up sich coorses, father dear, how happy we'd be, an' how happy yourself 'ud be!"

Conscience for a moment started from her sleep, and uttered a cry of guilt in his spirit: his face became ghastly, and his eyes full of horror; his lips quivered, and he was about to upbraid his daughter with more harshness than usual, when a low whistle, resembling that of a curlew, was heard at a chink of

the door. In a moment he gulped down another glass of spirits, and was on his feet: " Go, Denis, an' get the arms," said he to his brother, " while I let them in."

On opening the door, three men entered, having their great coats muffled about them, and their hats slouched. One of them, named Kenny, was a short villain, but of a thick-set, hairy, frame. The other was known as " the Big Mower," in consequence of his following that employment every season, and of his great skill in performing it. He had a deep-rooted objection against permitting the palm of his hand to be seen; a reluctance which common fame attributed to the fact of his having received on that part the impress of a hot iron, in the shape of the letter T, not forgetting to add, that T was the hieroglyphic for Thief. The villain himself affirmed it was simply the mark of a cross, burned into it by a blessed friar, as a charm against St. Vitus's dance, to which he had been subject. The people, however, were rather sceptical, not of the friar's power to cure that malady, but of the fact of his ever having moved a limb under it; and they concluded with telling him, good-humouredly enough, that notwithstanding the charm, he was destined to die " wid the threble of it in his toe." The third was a noted pedlar called Martin, who, under pretence of selling tape, pins, scissors, &c. was very useful in *setting* such premises as this virtuous fraternity might, without much risk, make a descent upon.

" I thought yees would' out-stay your time," said the elder Meehan, relapsing into his determined hardi-

hood of character; "we're ready, hours agone. Dick Rice gave me two curlew an' two patrich-calls to-day. Now pass the glass among yees, while Denny brings the arms. I know there's danger in this business, in regard of the Cassidys livin' so near us. If I see any body afut, I'll use the *curlew* call; an' if not, I'll whistle twice on the *patrich** one, an' yees may come an. The horse is worth aighty guineas, if he's worth a shillin'; an' we'll make sixty of him ourselves."

For some time they chatted about the plan in contemplation, and drank freely of the spirits, until at length the impatience of the elder Meehan at the delay of his brother became ungovernable. His voice deepened into tones of savage passion, as he uttered a series of blasphemous curses against this unfortunate butt of his indignation and malignity. At length he rushed out furiously to know why he did not return; but, on reaching a secret excavation in the mound against which the house was built, he found, to his utter dismay, that Denis had made his escape by an artificial passage, scooped out of it to secure themselves a retreat in case of surprise or detection. It opened behind the house among a clump of black-thorn and brushwood, and was covered with green turf in such a manner, as to escape the notice of all who were not acquainted with the secret. Meehan's face, on his return, was worked up into an expression truly awful.

"We're sould!" said he; "but, stop, I'll tache the thraithur what revinge is!"

In a moment he awoke his brother's two sons, and

* Partridge.

dragged them by the neck, one in each hand, to the hearth.

" Your villain of a father's off," said he, " to betray us: go, an' folly him; bring him back, an' he'll be safe from me: but let him become a *stag* agin us, an' if I should hunt you both into the bowels of the airth, I'll send yees to a short account. I don't care that," and he snapped his fingers—" ha, ha—no, I don't care that for the law; I know how to dale with it, when it comes! An, what's the stuff about the *other* world, but priestcraft and lies!"

" Maybe," said the Big Mower, " Denis is gone to get the foreway of us, an' to take the horse himself. Our best plan, is to lose no time, at all events; so let us hurry, for fraid the night might happen to clear up."

" He!" said Meehan, " he go alone! No: the miserable wretch is afeard of his own shadow. I only wondher he stuck to me so long: but sure he wouldn't, only I bate the courage in, and the fear out of him. You're right, Brian," said he upon reflection, " let us lose no time, but be off. Do yees mind?" he added to his nephews; " Did yees hear me? If you see him, let him come back, an' all will be berrid; but, if he doesn't, you know your fate;" saying which, he and his accomplices departed amid the howling of the storm.

The next morning, Carnmore, and indeed the whole parish, was in an uproar; a horse, worth eighty guineas, had been stolen in the most daring manner from the Cassidys, and the hue-and-cry was up after the thief or thieves who took him. For several days

the search was closely maintained, but without success; not the slightest trace could be found of him or them. The Cassidys could very well bear to lose him; but there were many struggling farmers, on whose property serious depredations had been committed, who could not sustain their loss so easily. It was natural under these circumstances, that suspicion should attach to many persons, some of whom had but indifferent characters before, as well as to several who certainly had never deserved suspicion. When a fortnight or so had elapsed, and no circumstances transpired that might lead to discovery, the neighbours, including those who had principally suffered by the robberies, determined to assemble upon a certain day at Cassidy's house, for the purpose of clearing themselves, on oath, of the imputations thrown out against some of them, as accomplices in the thefts. In order, however, that the ceremony should be performed as solemnly as possible, they determined to send for Father Farrell, and Mr. Nicholson, a magistrate, both of whom they requested to undertake the task of jointly presiding upon this occasion; and, that the circumstance should have every publicity, it was announced from the altar by the priest, on the preceding Sabbath, and published on the church-gate in large legible characters, ingeniously printed with a pen by the village schoolmaster.

In fact, the intended meeting, and the object of it, were already notorious; and much conversation was held upon its probable result, and the measures which might be taken against those who should refuse to swear. Of the latter description there was but one opinion, which was that their refusal in such a case

would be tantamount to guilt. The innocent were anxious to vindicate themselves from suspicion: and, as the suspected did not amount to more than a dozen, of course the whole body of the people, including the thieves themselves, who applauded it as loudly as the others, all expressed their satisfaction at the measures about to be adopted. A day was therefore appointed, on which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, particularly the suspected persons, should come to assemble at Cassidy's house, in order to have the characters of the innocent cleared up, and the guilty made known.

On the evening before this took place, were assembled in Meehan's cottage, the elder Meehan, and the rest of the gang, including Denis, who had absconded on the night of the theft.

"Well, well, Denny," said Anthony, who forced his rugged nature into an appearance of better temper, that he might strengthen the timid spirit of his brother against the scrutiny about to take place on the morrow—perhaps, too, he dreaded him—"Well, well, Denny, I thought sure enough, that it was some new piece of cowardice came over you. Just think of him," he added, "shabbin' off, only because he made, with a bit of a rod, three strokes in the ashes that he thought resembled a coffin!—ha, ha, ha!"

This produced a peal of derision at Denis's pusillanimous terror.

"Ay!" said the Big Mower, "he was makin' a coffin, was he? I wondher it wasn't a rope you drew, Denny. If any here dies in the coil, it will be the greatest coward, an' that's yourself."

"You may all laugh," replied Denis, "but I know such things to have a manin'. When my mother died, didn't my father, the heavens be his bed! see a black coach about a week before it? an' sure from the first day she tuck ill, the dead-watch was heard in the house every night: and what was more nor that, she kept *warm* until she went into her grave;* an', accordingly, didn't my sisther Shibby die within a year afther?"

"It's no matther about thim things," replied Anthony; "it's thruth about the dead-watch, my mother keepin' warm, an' Shibby's death, any way. But on the night we tuck Cassidy's horse, I thought you were goin' to betray us: I was surely in a murdherin' passion, an' would have done harm, only things turned out as they did."

"Why," said Denis, "the thruth is, I was afeard *some* of us would be shot, an' that the lot would fall on myself; for the coffin, thinks I, was sent as a warnin'. How-and-ever, I spied about Cassidy's stable, till I seen that the coast was clear; so whin I heard the low cry of the patrich that Anthony and I agreed on, I joined yees."

"Well, about to-morrow," observed Kenny—"ha, ha, ha!—there'll be lots o' swearin'. Why the whole parish is to switch the primer; many a thumb and coat-cuff will be kissed in spite of priest or magistrate. I remimber once, whin I was swearin' an *alibi* for

* It is supposed in Ireland, when a corpse retains, for a longer space of time than usual, any thing like animal heat, that some person belonging to the family of the deceased will die within a year.

long Paddy Murray, that suffered for the M'Gees, I kissed my thumb, I thought, so smoothly, that no one would notish it; but I had a keen one to dale with, so says he, 'You know for the matther o' that, my good fellow, that you have your *thumb* to kiss every day in the week,' says he, 'but you might salute the *book* out o' dacency and good manners; not,' says he, 'that you an' it are strangers aither; for, if I don't mistake, you're an ould hand at swearin' alibis.' At all evints, I had to smack the book itself, and it's I, and Barney Green, and Tim Casserly, that did swear stiffly for Paddy, but the thing was too clear agin him. So he suffered, poor fellow, an' died right game, for he said over his *dhrop*—ha, ha, ha—that he was as innocent o' the murder as a child unborn: an' so he was in *one* sinse, bein' afther gettin' absolution."

"As to thumb-kissin'," observed the elder Meehan, "let there be none of it among us to-morrow; if we're caught at it 'twould be as bad as stayin' away altogether: for my part, I'll give it a smack like a pistol shot—ha, ha, ha!"

"I hope they won't bring the priest's book," said Denis. "I haven't the laste objection agin payin' my respects to the *magistrate's* paper, but somehow I don't like tastin' the *priest's* in a falsity."

"Don't you know," said the Big Mower, "that whin a magistrate's present, it's ever an' always only the Tistament *by law* that's used. I myself wouldn't kiss the mass-book in a falsity.

"There's none of us sayin' we'd do it in a lie," said the elder Meehan; "an' it's well for thousands that the law doesn't use the priest's book; though,

after all, aren't there books that say religion's all a sham. I think myself it is; for if what they talk about justice an' Providence is thrue, would Tom Dillon be transported for the robbery *we* committed at Bantry? Tom, it's true, was an ould offender; but he was innocent of *that*, any way. The world's all chance, boys, as sargint Eustace used to say, and whin we die there's no more about us; so that I don't see why a man mightn't as well *switch* the priest's book as any other, only that, somehow, a body can't shake the terror of it off o' them."

"I dunna, Anthony, but you an' I ought to curse that sargint; only for him we mightn't be as we are, sore in our conscience, an' afeard of every fut we hear passin'," observed Denis.

"Spake for your own cowardly heart, man alive," replied Anthony; "for my part, I'm afeard o' nothin'. Put round the glass, and don't be nursin' it there all night. Sure we're not so bad as the rot among the sheep, nor the black leg among the bullocks, nor the staggers among the horses, any how; an' yet they'd hang us up only for bein' fond of a bit o' mate—ha, ha, ha!"

"Thrue enough," said the Big Mower, philosophizing—"God made the beef and the mutton, and the grass to fed it; but it was man made the ditches: now we're only bringin' things back to the right way that Providence made them in, when ould times were in it, manin' before ditches war invinted—ha, ha, ha!"

"'Tis a good argument," observed Kenny, "only that judge and jury would be a little delicate in actin'

up to it; an' the more's the pity. Howsomever, as Providence made the mutton, sure it's not harm for us to take what he sends."

"Ay; but," said Denis,

> "God made man, an' man made money;
> God made bees, an' bees made honey:
> God made Satan, an' Satan made sin;
> An' God made a hell to put Satan in.

Let nobody say there's not a hell; isn't there it plain from Scripthur?"

"I wish you had Scripthur tied about your neck!" replied Anthony—"How fond of it one o' the greatest thieves that ever missed the rope is! Why the fellow could plan a roguery with any man that ever danced the hangman's hornpipe, an' yit he be's repatin' bits an' scraps of ould prayers, an' charms, an' stuff. Ay, indeed! Sure he has a varse out o' the Bible, that he thinks can prevint a man from bein' hung up any day!"

While Denny, the Big Mower, and the two Meehans were thus engaged in giving expression to their peculiar opinions, the Pedlar held a conversation of a different kind with Anne.

With the secrets of the family in his keeping, he commenced a rather penitent review of his own life, and expressed his intention of abandoning so dangerous a mode of accumulating wealth. He said he thanked heaven that he had already laid up sufficient for the wants of a reasonable man; that he understood farming and the management of *sheep* particularly well: that it was his intention to remove to a different part of the kingdom, and take a farm; and

that nothing prevented him from having done this before, but the want of a helpmate to take care of his establishment: he added, that his present wife was of an intolerable temper, and a greater villain by fifty degrees than himself. He concluded by saying, that his conscience twitched him night and day for living with her, and that by abandoning her immediately, becoming truly religious, and taking Anne in her place, he hoped, he said, to atone in some measure for his former errors.

Anthony, however, having noticed the earnestness which marked the Pedlar's manner, suspected him of attempting to corrupt the principles of his daughter, having forgotten the influence which his own opinions were calculated to produce upon her heart.

"Martin," said he, "'twould be as well you ped attintion to what we're sayin' in regard o' the trial to-morrow, as to be palaverin' talk into the girl's ear that can't be good comin' from *your* lips. Quit it, I say, quit it! *Corp an duowol*—I wont allow such proceedins!"

"Swear till you blister your lips, Anthony," replied Martin: "as for me, bein' no residenthur, I'm not bound to it; an' what's more, I'm not suspected. 'Tis settin' some other bit o' work for yees I'll be, while you're all clearin' yourselves from stealin' honest Cassidy's horse. I wish we had him safely disposed of in the mane time, an' the money for him an' the other beasts in our pockets."

Much more conversation of a similar kind passed between them upon various topics connected with their profligacy and crimes. At length they separated for

the night, after having concerted their plan of action for the ensuing scrutiny.

The next morning, before the hour appointed arrived, the parish, particularly the neighbourhood of Carnmore, was struck with deep consternation. Labour became suspended, mirth disappeared, and every face was marked with paleness, anxiety, and apprehension. If two men met, one shook his head mysteriously, and inquired from the other, "Did you hear the news?"

"Ay! ay! the Lord be about us all! I did; an' I pray God it may lave the counthry as it came to it!"

"Oh, an' that it may, I humbly make supplication this day!"

If two women met, it was with similar mystery and fear: "*Vread*, do you know what's at the Cassidys'?"

"Whisht, a-hagur, I do; but let what will happen, sure it's best for us to say nothin'."

"Say! the blessed Virgin forbid! I'd cut my hand off o' me, afore I'd spake a word about it; only that"——

"Whisht! woman—for mercy's sake—don't"——

And so they would separate, each crossing herself devoutly.

The meeting at Cassidy's was to take place that day at twelve o'clock; but, about two hours before the appointed time, Anne, who had been in some of the other houses, came into her father's, quite pale, breathless and trembling.

'Oh!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands, whilst the tears fell fast from her eyes, "we'll be lost,

ruined;—did yees hear what's in the neighbourhood wid the Cassidys?"

"Girl," said the father, with more severity than he had ever manifested to her before, "I never yit *ris* my hand to you, but, *ma corp an duowol*, if you open your lips, I'll *fell* you where you stand. Do you want that cowardly uncle o' yours to be the manes o' hangin' your father? Maybe that was one o' the lessons Martin gave you last night?" And as he spoke he knit his brows at her with that murderous scowl which was habitual to him. The girl trembled, and began to think that since her father's temper deepened in domestic outrage and violence as his crimes multiplied, the sooner she left the family the better. Every day, indeed, diminished that species of instinctive affection which she had entertained towards him; and this, in proportion as her reason ripened into a capacity for comprehending the dark materials of which his character was composed. Whether he himself began to consider detection at hand, or not, we cannot say; but it is certain, that his conduct was marked with a callous recklessness of spirit, which increased in atrocity to such a degree, that even his daughter could only *not* look on him with *disgust*.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Denis, with alarm: "is it any thing about us, Anthony?"

"No, 'tisn't," replied the other, "any thing about us! What 'ud it be about us for? 'Tis a lyin' report that some cunnin' knave spread, hopin' to find out the guilty. But hear me, Denis, once for all; we're goin' to clear ourselves—now listen—an' let my words sink deep into your heart: if you refuse to

swear this day—no matther *what's* put into your hand—you'll do harm—that's all: have courage, man; but should you *cow*, your coorse will be short; an' mark, even if *you* escape me, your sons won't: I have it all planned; an' *corp an duowol!* thim you won't know from Adam will revinge me, if I'm taken up through your unmanliness."

"'Twould be betther for us to lave the counthry," said Anne; "we might slip away as it is."

"Ay," said the father, "an' be taken by the neck afore we'd get two miles from the place! no, no, girsha; it's the safest way to brazen thim out. Did you hear me, Denis?"

Denis started, for he had been evidently pondering on the mysterious words of Anne, to which his brother's anxiety to conceal them gave additional mystery. The coffin, too, recurred to him; and he feared that the death shadowed out by it, would in some manner or other occur in the family. He was, in fact, one of those miserable villains with but half a conscience;—that is to say, as much as makes them the slaves of the fear which results from crime, without being the slightest impediment to their committing it. It was no wonder he started at the deep pervading tones of his brother's voice, for the question was put with ferocious energy.

On starting, he looked with vague terror on his brother, fearing, but not comprehending, his question.

"What is it, Anthony?" he inquired.

"Oh, for that matther," replied the other, "nothin' at all: think o' what I said to you, any how; swear through thick an' thin, if you have a regard for

your own health, or for your childher. Maybe I had betther repate it agin for you," he continued, eying him with mingled hatred and suspicion. "Denis, as a friend, I bid you mind yourself this day, an' see you don't bring aither of us into throuble."

There lay before the Cassidys' houses a small flat of common, trodden into rings by the young horses they were in the habit of training. On this level space were assembled those who came, either to clear their own character from suspicion, or to witness the ceremony. The day was dark and lowering, and heavy clouds rolled slowly across the peaks of the surrounding mountains; scarcely a breath of air could be felt; and, as the country people silently approached, such was the closeness of the day, their haste to arrive in time, and their general anxiety, either for themselves or their friends, that almost every man, on reaching the spot, might be seen taking up the skirts of his "cothamore," or "big coat," (the peasant's handkerchief,) to wipe the sweat from his brow; and as he took off his dingy woollen hat, or caubeen, the perspiration rose in strong exhalations from his head

"Michael, am I in time?" might be heard from such persons, as they arrived: "did this business begin yit?"

"Full time, Larry; myself's here an hour ago, but no appearance of any thing as yit. Father Farrell an' Squire Nicholson are both in Cassidy's waitin' till they're all *gother*, whin they'll begin to put thim through their facins. You hard about what they've got?"

"No; for I'm only on my way home from the berril

of a *cleaveen* of mine, that we put down this mornin' in Tullyard. What is it?"

"Why, man alive, it's through the whole parish *inready*,"—he then went on, lowering his voice to a whisper, and speaking in a tone bordering on dismay.

The other crossed himself, and betrayed symptoms of awe and astonishment, not unmingled with fear.

"Well," he replied, "I dunna whether I'd come here, if I'd known that; for, innocent or guilty, I wouldn't wish to be near it. Och, may God pity thim that's to come acrass it, espishily if they dare to do it in a lie!"

"They needn't, I can tell yees both," observed a third person, "be a hair afeard of it, for the best rason livin', that there's no thruth at all in the report, nor the Cassidys never thought of sindin' for any thing o' the kind: I have it from Larry Cassidy's own lips, an' he ought to know best."

The truth is, that two reports were current among the crowd: one, that the oath was to be simply on the Bible; and the other, that a more awful means of expurgation was resorted to by the Cassidys. The people, consequently, not knowing which to credit, felt that most painful of all sensations—uncertainty.

During the period which intervened between their assembling and the commencement of the ceremony, a spectator, interested in contemplating the workings of human nature in circumstances of deep interest, would have had ample scope for observation. The occasion was to them a solemn one. There was little conversation among them; for when a man is wound up to a pitch of great interest, he is seldom disposed

to relish discourse. Every brow was anxious, every cheek blanched, and every arm folded: they scarcely stirred, or when they did, only with slow abstracted movements, rather mechanical than voluntary. If an individual made his appearance about Cassidy's door, a sluggish stir among them was visible, and a low murmur of a peculiar character might be heard; but on perceiving that it was only some ordinary person, all subsided again into a brooding stillness that was equally singular and impressive.

Under this peculiar feeling was the multitude, when Meehan and his brother were seen approaching it from their own house. The elder, with folded arms, and hat pulled over his brows, stalked grimly forward, having that remarkable scowl upon his face, which had contributed to establish for him so diabolical a character. Denis walked by his side, with his countenance strained to inflation;—a miserable parody of that sullen effrontery which marked the unshrinking miscreant beside him. He had not heard of the ordeal, owing to the caution of Anthony; but, notwithstanding his effort at indifference, a keen eye might have observed the latent anxiety of a man who was habitually villanous, and naturally timid.

When this pair entered the crowd, a few secret glances, too rapid to be noticed by the people, passed between them and their accomplices. Denis, on seeing them present, took fresh courage, and looked with the heroism of a blusterer upon those who stood about him, especially whenever he found himself under the scrutinizing eye of his brother. Such was the horror and detestation in which they were held, that on ad-

vancing into the assembly, the persons on each side turned away, and openly avoided them: eyes full of fierce hatred were bent on them vindictively, and "curses, not loud, but deep," were muttered with an indignation which nothing but a divided state of feeling could repress within due limits. Every glance, however, was paid back by Anthony with interest, from eyes and black shaggy brows tremendously ferocious; and his curses, as they rolled up half smothered from his huge chest, were deeper and more diabolical by far than their own. He even jeered at them; but, however disgusting his frown, there was something truly appalling in the dark gleam of his scoff, which threw them at an immeasurable distance behind him, in the power of displaying on the countenance the worst of human passions.

At length Mr. Nicholson, Father Farrell, and his curate, attended by the Cassidys and their friends, issued from the house: two or three servants preceded them, bearing a table and chairs for the magistrate and priests, who, however, stood during the ceremony. When they entered one of the rings before alluded to, the table and chairs were placed in the centre of it, and Father Farrell, as possessing most influence over the people, addressed them very impressively.

"There are," said he, in conclusion, "persons in this crowd whom we know to be guilty; but we will have an opportunity of now witnessing the lengths to which crime, long indulged in, can carry them. To such people I would say, *beware!* for they know not the situation in which they are placed."

During all this time there was not the slightest allusion made to the mysterious ordeal which had excited so much awe and apprehension among them—a circumstance which occasioned many a pale, downcast face to clear up, and reassume its usual cheerful expression. The crowd now were assembled around the ring, and every man on whom an imputation had been fastened came forward, when called upon, to the table at which the priests and magistrate stood uncovered. The form of the oath was framed by the two clergymen, who, as they knew the reservations and evasions commonest among such characters, had ingeniously contrived not to leave a single loop-hole through which the consciences of those who belonged to this worthy fraternity might escape.

To those acquainted with Irish courts of justice there was nothing particularly remarkable in the swearing. Indeed, one who stood among the crowd might hear from those who were stationed at the greatest distance from the table, such questions as the following:—

"Is the *thing* in it, Art?"

"No; 'tis nothin' but the *Law* Bible, the magistrate's own one."

To this the querist would reply, with a satisfied nod of the head, "Oh, is that all? I heard they war to have *it*;" on which he would push himself through the crowd until he reached the table, where he took his oath as readily as another.

"Jem Hartigan," said the magistrate, to one of those persons, "are *you* to swear?"

"Faix, myself doesn't know, your honour; only

that I hard them say that the Cassidys mintioned our names along wid many other honest people; an' one wouldn't, in that case, lie under a false report, your honour, from any one, when we're as clear as them that never saw the light of any thing of the kind."

The magistrate then put the book into his hand, and Jem, in return, fixed his eye, with much apparent innocence, on his face: "Now, Jem Hartigan," &c. &c. and the oath was accordingly administered. Jem put the book to his mouth, with his thumb raised to an acute angle on the back of it; nor was the smack by any means a silent one which he gave it, (his thumb.)

The magistrate set his ear with the air of a man who had experience in discriminating such sounds. "Hartigan," said he, "you'll condescend to kiss the *book*, Sir, if you please: there's a hollowness in that smack, my good fellow, that can't escape *me*."

"Not kiss it, your honour? why, by this staff in my hand, if ever a man kissed"—

"Silence, you impostor," said the curate; "I watched you closely, and am confident your lips never touched the book."

"My lips *never* touched the book!—Why, you know I'd be sarry to conthradict either o' yees; but I was jist goin' to absarve, wid simmission, that my own lips ought to know best; an' don't you hear them tellin' you that they *did* kiss it:" and he grinned with confidence in their faces.

"You double-dealing reprobate," said the parish priest, "I'll lay my whip across your jaws. I saw you, too, an' you did *not* kiss the book."

"By dad, an' maybe I did *not*, sure enough," he replied: any man may make a mistake unknownst to himself; but I'd give my oath, an' be the five crasses, I kissed it as sure as—— however, a good thing's never the worse o' bein' twice done, gintlemen; so here goes, jist to satisfy yees;" and, placing the book near his mouth, and altering his position a little, he appeared to comply, though, on the contrary, he touched neither it nor his thumb. "It's the same thing to me," he continued, laying down the book with an air of confident assurance, "It's the same thing to me if I kissed it fifty times over, which I'm ready to do if *that* doesn't satisfy yees."

As every man acquitted himself of the charges brought against him, the curate immediately took down his name. Indeed, before the "clearing" commenced, he requested that such as were to swear would stand together within the ring, that, after having sworn, he might hand each of them a certificate of the fact, which they appeared to think might be serviceable to them, should they happen to be subsequently indicted for the same crime in a court of justice. This, however, was only a plan to keep them together for what was soon to take place.

The detections of thumb-kissing were received by those who had already sworn, and by several in the outward crowd, with much mirth. It is but justice, however, to many of those assembled to state, that they appeared to entertain a serious opinion of the nature of the ceremony, and no small degree of abhorrence against those who seemed to trifle with the solemnity of an oath.

Standing on the edge of the circle, in the innermost row, were Meehan and his brother. The former eyed, with all the hardness of a Stoic, the successive individuals, as they passed up to the table. His accomplices had gone forward, and to the surprise of many who strongly suspected them, in the most indifferent manner "cleared" themselves in the trying words of the oath, of all knowledge of, and participation in, the thefts that had taken place.

The grim visage of the elder Meehan was marked by a dark smile, scarcely perceptible; but his brother, whose nerves were not so firm, appeared somewhat confused and distracted by the imperturbable villany of the perjurers.

At length they were called up. Anthony advanced slowly, but collectedly, to the table, only turning his eye slightly about, to observe if his brother accompanied him. "Denis," said he, "which of us will swear first? you may;" for as he doubted his brother's firmness, he was prudent enough, should he fail, to guard against having the sin of perjury to answer for, along with those demands which his country had to make for his other crimes. Denis took the book, and cast a slight glance at his brother, as if for encouragement; their eyes met, and the darkened brow of Anthony hinted at the danger of flinching in this crisis. The tremor of his hand was not, perhaps, visible to any but Anthony, who, however, did not overlook this circumstance. He held the book, but raised not his eye to meet the looks of either the magistrate or the priests; the colour also left his face, as with shrinking lips he touched the

Word of God in deliberate falsehood. Having then laid it down, Anthony received it with a firm grasp, and whilst his eye turned boldly in contemptuous mockery upon those who presented it, he impressed it with the kiss of a man whose depraved conscience seemed to goad him only to evil. After "clearing" himself, he laid the Bible upon the table with the affected air of a person who felt hurt at the imputation of theft, and joined the rest with a frown upon his countenance, and a smothered curse upon his lips.

Just at this moment, a person from Cassidy's house laid upon the table a small box covered with black cloth; and our readers will be surprised to hear, that if fire had come down visibly from heaven, greater awe and fear could not have been struck into their hearts, or depicted upon their countenances. The casual conversation, and the commentaries upon the ceremony they had witnessed, instantly settled into a most profound silence, and every eye was turned towards it with an interest absolutely fearful.

"Let," said the curate, "none of those who have sworn depart from within the ring, until they *once more* clear themselves upon this," and as he spoke, he held it up—"behold!" said he, "and tremble—behold THE DONAGH!!!"

A low murmur of awe and astonishment burst from the people in general, whilst those within the ring, who, with few exceptions, were the worst characters in the parish, appeared ready to sink into the earth. Their countenances, for the most part, paled into the condemned hue of guilt; many of them became almost unable to stand; and altogether, the state of trepida-

tion and terror in which they stood, was strikingly wild and extraordinary.

The curate proceeded: "Let him now who is guilty depart; or, if he wishes, advance, and challenge the awful penalty annexed to perjury upon THIS! Who has ever been known to swear falsely upon the Donagh, without being visited by a tremendous punishment, either on the spot, or in twenty-four hours after his perjury? If we ourselves have not seen such instances with our own eyes, it is because none liveth who dare incur such a dreadful penalty; but we have heard of those who did, and of their awful punishment afterwards. Sudden death, madness, paralysis, self-destruction, or the murder of some one dear to them, are the marks by which perjury upon the Donagh is known and visited. Advance, now, ye who are innocent, but let the guilty withdraw; for we do not desire to witness the terrible vengeance which would attend a false oath upon the DONAGH. Pause, therefore, and be cautious! for if this grievous sin be committed, a heavy punishment will fall, not only upon you, but upon the parish in which it occurs!"

The words of the priest sounded to the guilty like the death-sentence of a judge. Before he had concluded, all, except Meehan and his brother, and a few who were really innocent, had slunk back out of the circle into the crowd. Denis, however, became pale as a corpse; and from time to time wiped the large drops from his haggard brow: even Anthony's cheek, despite of his natural callousness, was less red; his eyes became disturbed; but by their influ-

ence, he contrived to keep Denis in sufficient dread, to prevent him from mingling, like the rest, among the people. The few who remained along with them, advanced; and notwithstanding their innocence, when the Donagh was presented and the figure of Christ and the Twelve Apostles displayed in the solemn tracery of its rude carving, they exhibited symptoms of fear. With trembling hands they touched the Donagh, and with trembling lips kissed the Crucifix, in attestation of their guiltlessness of the charge with which they had been accused.

"Anthony and Denis Meehan, come forward," said the curate, "and declare your innocence of the crimes with which you are charged by the Cassidys and others."

Anthony advanced; but Denis stood rooted to the ground; on perceiving which, the former sternly returned a step or two, and catching him by the arm with an admonitory grip, that could not easily be misunderstood, compelled him to proceed with himself step by step to the table. Denis, however, could feel the strong man tremble, and perceive that although he strove to lash himself into the energy of despair, and the utter disbelief of all religious sanction, yet the trial before him called every slumbering prejudice and apprehension of his mind into active power. This was a death-blow to his own resolution, or rather it confirmed him in his previous determination not to swear on the Donagh, except to acknowledge his guilt, which he could scarcely prevent himself from doing, such was the vacillating state of mind to which he felt himself reduced.

When Anthony reached the table, his huge form seemed to dilate by his effort at maintaining the firmness necessary to support him in this awful struggle between conscience and superstition on the one hand, and guilt, habit, and infidelity, on the other. He fixed his deep, dilated eyes upon the Donagh, in a manner that betokened somewhat of irresolution: his countenance fell; his colour came and went, but eventually settled in a flushed red; his powerful hands and arms trembled so much, that he folded them to prevent his agitation from being noticed: the grimness of his face ceased to be stern, while it retained the blank expression of guilt; his temples swelled out with the terrible play of their blood vessels; his chest, too, heaved up and down with the united pressure of guilt, and the tempest which shook him within. At length he saw Denis's eye upon him, and his passions took a new direction; he knit his brows at him with more than usual fierceness, ground his teeth, and with a step and action of suppressed fury, he placed his foot at the edge of the table, and bowing down under the eye of God and man, took the awful oath on the mysterious Donagh, in a falsehood! When it was finished, a feeble groan broke from his brother's lips. Anthony bent his eye on him with a deadly glare; but Denis saw it not. The shock was beyond his courage,—he had become insensible.

Those who stood at the outskirts of the crowd, seeing Denis apparently lifeless, thought he must have sworn falsely on the Donagh, and exclaimed, "He's dead! gracious God! Denis Meehan's struck dead by the Donagh! He swore in a lie, and is now

a corpse!" Anthony paused, and calmly surveyed him as he lay with his head resting upon the hands of those who supported him. At this moment a silent breeze came over where they stood; and, as the Donagh lay upon the table, the black ribbons with which it was ornamented fluttered with a melancholy appearance, that deepened the sensations of the people into something peculiarly solemn and preternatural. Denis at length revived; and stared wildly and vacantly about him. When composed sufficiently to distinguish and recognise individual objects, he looked upon the gloomy visage and threatening eye of his brother, and shrunk back with a terror almost epileptical. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "save me! save me from that man, and I'll discover all!"

Anthony calmly folded one arm into his bosom, and his lip quivered with the united influence of hatred and despair.

"Hould him!" shrieked a voice, which proceeded from his daughter, "hould my father, or he'll murdher him! Oh! oh! merciful heaven!"

Ere the words were uttered, she had made an attempt to clasp the arms of her parent, whose motions she understood; but only in time to receive from the pistol, which he had concealed in his breast, the bullet aimed at her uncle! She tottered! and the blood spouted out of her neck upon her father's brows, who hastily put up his hand and wiped it away, for it had actually blinded him.

The elder Meehan was a tall man, and as he stood, elevated nearly a head above the crowd, his grim brows red with his daughter's blood—which, in attempting to wipe away, he had deeply streaked

Designed & Etched by W H Brooke F.S.A.

"Hould my Father, or he'll murdher him!

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across his face—his eyes shooting fiery gleams of his late resentment, mingled with the wildness of unexpected horror—as he thus stood, it would be impossible to contemplate a more revolting picture of that state to which the principles that had regulated his life must ultimately lead, even in this world.

On perceiving what he had done, the deep working of his powerful frame was struck into sudden stillness, and he turned his eyes on his bleeding daughter, with a fearful perception of her situation. Now was the harvest of his creed and crimes reaped in blood; and he felt that the stroke which had fallen upon him, was one of those by which God will sometimes bare his arm and vindicate his justice. The reflection, however, shook him not: the reality of his misery was too intense and pervading, and grappled too strongly with his hardened and unbending spirit, to waste its power upon a nerve or a muscle. It was abstracted, and beyond the reach of bodily suffering. From the moment his daughter fell, he moved not: his lips were half open with the conviction produced by the blasting truth of her death, effected prematurely by his own hand.

Those parts of his face which had not been stained with her blood, assumed an ashy paleness, and rendered his countenance more terrific by the contrast. Tall, powerful, and motionless, he appeared to the crowd, glaring at the girl, like a tiger anxious to join his offspring yet stunned with the shock of the bullet which has touched a vital part. His iron-grey hair, as it fell in thick masses about his neck, was moved slightly by the blast, and a lock which fell over his temple, was blown back with a motion rendered

more distinct by his statue-like attitude, immovable as death.

A silent and awful gathering of the people around this impressive scene, intimated their knowledge of what they considered to be a judicial punishment annexed to perjury upon the Donagh. This relic lay on the table, and the eyes of those who stood within view of it, turned from Anthony's countenance to it, and again back to his blood-stained visage, with all the overwhelming influence of superstitious fear. Shudderings, tremblings, crossings, and ejaculations, marked their conduct and feeling; for though the incident in itself was simply a fatal and uncommon one, yet *they* considered it supernatural and miraculous.

At length a loud and agonizing cry burst from the lips of Meehan—"Oh, God!—God of heaven an' earth!—have I murdhered my daughter?" and he cast down the fatal weapon with a force which buried it some inches into the wet clay.

The crowd had closed upon Anne; but, with the strength of a giant, he flung them aside, caught the girl in his arms, and pressed her bleeding to his bosom. He gasped for breath: "Anne," said he, "Anne, I am without hope, an' there's none to forgive me except you;—none at all: from God, to the poorest of his creatures, I am hated an' cursed by all, except you! Don't curse me, Anne; don't curse me! Oh, is'nt it enough, darlin', that my sowl is now stained with *your* blood, along with my other crimes? Oh, think, darlin', of my broken heart! In hell, on earth, an' in heaven, there's none to forgive your father but yourself!—NONE! NONE! Oh, what's comin' over me! I'm dizzy an' shiverin'! How

cowld the day's got of a sudden! Hould up, *avourneen machree!* I *was* a bad man; but to *you*, Anne, I was *not* as I was to every one! Darlin', oh, look at me with forgiveness in your eye, or any way don't *curse* me! Oh! I'm far cowlder now! Tell me that you forgive me, *acushla oge machree!—Manim asthee hu*,* darlin' say it. I DAR'N'T LOOK TO GOD! but oh! do *you* say the forgivin' word to your father before you die!"

"Father," said she, "I deserve this—it's only just: I had plotted with that divilish Martin to betray them all, except yourself, an' to get the reward; an' then we intended to go—an'—live at a distance—an' in wickedness—where we—might not be known—he's at our house—let him be—secured. Forgive me, father;—you said so often that there was no thruth in religion—that I began to—think so. Oh!—God! have mercy upon me!" And with these words she expired.

Meehan's countenance, on hearing this, was overspread with a ghastly look of the most desolating agony: he staggered back, and the body of his daughter, which he strove to hold, would have fallen from his arms, had it not been caught by the bystanders. His eye sought out his brother, but not in resentment. "Oh! she died, but didn't say 'I FORGIVE YOU!' Denis," said he, "Denis, bring me home—I'm sick—very sick—oh, but it's cowld—every thing's reeling—cowld—cowld it is!"—and as he uttered the last words, he shuddered, fell down in a fit of apoplexy, never to rise again; and the bodies of

* Young pulse of my heart! my soul is within thee.

his daughter and himself were both waked and buried together.

The result is brief. The rest of the gang were secured: Denis became approver, by whose evidence they suffered that punishment decreed by law to the crimes of which they had been guilty. The two events which we have just related, of course, added to the supernatural fear and reverence previously entertained for this terrible relic. It is still used as an ordeal of expurgation, in cases of stolen property; and we are not wrong in asserting, that many of those misguided creatures, who too frequently hesitate not to swear falsely on the word of God, would suffer death itself, sooner than commit a perjury on the Donagh. (A.)

PHIL PURCEL, THE PIG-DRIVER.

AN OUTLINE.

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Phil Purcel was a singular character, for he was never married; but notwithstanding his singularity, no man ever possessed, for practical purposes, a more plentiful stock of duplicity. All his acquaintances knew that Phil was a knave of the first water, yet was he decidedly a general favourite. Now as we hate mystery ourselves, we shall reveal the secret of this remarkable popularity; though, after all, it can scarcely be called so, for Phil was not the first cheat who has been popular in his day. The cause of his success lay simply in this;—that he never laughed; and none of our readers need be told, that the appearance of a grave cheat in Ireland is an originality which almost runs up into a miracle. This gravity induced every one to look upon him as a phenomenon. The assumed simplicity of his manners was astonishing, and the ignorance which he feigned, so apparently natural, that it was scarcely possible for the most keen-sighted searcher into human motives to detect him. The only

way of understanding the man was to deal with him: if, after *that*, you did not comprehend him thoroughly, the fault was not Phil's, but your own. Although not mirthful himself, he was the cause of mirth in others; for, without ever smiling at his own gains, he contrived to make others laugh at their losses. His disposition, setting aside laughter, was strictly anomalous. The most incompatible, the most unamalgamatible, and the most uncomeatable qualities that ever refused to unite in the same individual, had no scruple at all to unite in Phil. But we hate metaphysics, which we leave to the mechanical philosophers, and proceed to state that Phil was a miser, which is the best explanation we can give of his gravity.

Ireland, owing to the march of intellect, and the superiority of modern refinement, has been for some years past, and is at present, well supplied with an abundant variety of professional men, every one of whom will undertake, for proper considerations, to teach us, Irish, all manner of useful accomplishments. The drawing-master talks of his profession; the dancing-master of *his* profession; the fiddler, tooth-drawer, and corn-cutter, (who, by the way, *reaps* a richer harvest than we do,) since the devil has tempted the schoolmaster to go abroad, are all practising in his absence, as professional men.

Now Phil must be included among this class of grandiloquent gentlemen, for he entered life as a Professor of Pig-driving; and it is but justice towards him to assert, that no corn-cutter of them all ever elevated his profession so high as Phil did that in which he practised. In fact, he raised it to the most

exalted pitch of improvement of which it was then susceptible; or to use the cant of the day, he soon arrived at "the head of his profession."

In Phil's time, however, pig-driving was not so general, nor had it made such rapid advances as in modern times. It was, then, simply pig-driving, unaccompanied by the improvements of poverty, sickness, and famine. The governments of those days were not so enlightened as the governments of these. Political economy had not taught the people how to be poor upon the most scientific principles; free trade had not shown the nation the most improved plan of reducing itself to the lowest possible state of distress; nor liberalism enabled the working classes to scoff at religion, and wisely to stop at the very line that lies between outrage and rebellion. Many errors and inconveniences, now happily exploded, were then in existence. The people, it is true, were somewhat attached to their landlords, but still they were burdened with the unnecessary appendages of good coats and stout shoes; were tolerably industrious, and had the mortification of being able to pay their rents, and feed in comfort. They were not, as they are now, free from new coats and old prejudices, nor improved by the intellectual march of politics and poverty. When either a man or a nation starves, it is a luxury to starve in an enlightened manner; and nothing is more consolatory to a person acquainted with public rights and constitutional privileges, than to understand those liberal principles upon which he fasts and goes naked.

From all we have said, the reader sees clearly that

pig-driving did not then proceed upon so extensive a scale as it does at present. The people, in fact, killed many of them for their own use; and we know not how it happened, but political ignorance and good bacon kept them in more flesh and comfort than those theories which have since succeeded so well in introducing the science of starvation as the basis of national prosperity. Irishmen are frequently taxed with extravagance, in addition to their other taxes; but we should be glad to know what people in Europe reduce economy in the articles of food and clothing to such close practice as they do. Our governments and our landlords appear to be trying such an experiment upon our great power of living on a little food, as the man did who entertained the warm expectation of being able to bring his horse to live without it; but who, when he had brought him to one straw *per diem*, found that the animal was compelled to decline the comforts of such economy, by dying in his own defence. In our ignorant days we had a trade, but no Custom-house; and now, in our enlightened days, we have a Custom-house, but no trade. Our Institutions have become Absentees, like our landlords, and are to be found spending their money in London, in order to increase the prosperity, and secure the attachment of Irishmen.

An old bachelor uncle of ours, in the country, seduced by the plausibility of a tailor's puff in the metropolis, sent him, in reliance upon what he professed in it, his height and weight for a suit of clothes. The clothes came; but as the old gentleman happened to be wry-necked, wore his head, in fact, upon one of

his shoulders, and was a little hump-backed, into the bargain—points which he either forgot, or declined mentioning—it is unnecessary to say, that the clothes did not fit.

"I ought to have known," said the old gentleman, "from the peculiarity of my make, that no tailor could fit me without taking my measure."

In like manner may we say that England is legislating for us without taking our measure; and that her laws, consequently, are a bad fit, considering the unconscionable price we pay for them.

There was, in Ireland, an old breed of swine, which is now nearly extinct, except in some remote parts of the country, where they are still useful in the hunting season, particularly if dogs happen to be scarce.* They were a tall, loose species, with legs of an unusual length, with no flesh, short ears, as if they had been cropped for sedition, and with long faces of a highly intellectual cast. They were also of such activity that few greyhounds could clear a ditch or cross a field with more agility or speed. Their backs formed a rainbow arch, capable of being contracted or extended to an inconceivable degree; and their usual rate of travelling in droves was at mail-coach speed, or six Irish miles an hour, preceded by an outrider to clear the way, whilst their rear was brought up by another horseman, going at a three-quarter gallop.

In the middle of summer, when all nature reposed under the united influence of heat and dust, it was an interesting sight to witness a drove of them sweeping

* We assure John Bull, on the authority of Phil Purcel, that this is a fact.

past, like a whirlwind, in a cloud of their own raising; their sharp and lengthy outlines dimly visible through the shining haze, like a flock of antelopes crossing the deserts of the east.

But alas! for those happy days! This breed is now a curiosity—few specimens of it remaining except in the mountainous parts of the country, whither these lovers of liberty, like the free natives of the back settlements of America, have retired to avoid the encroachments of civilization, and exhibit their Irish antipathy to the slavish comforts of steam-boat navigation, and the relaxing luxuries of English feeding.

Indeed, their patriotism, as evinced in an attachment to Ireland and Irish habits, was scarcely more remarkable than their sagacity. There is not an antiquarian among the members of that learned and useful body, the Irish Academy, who can boast such an intimate knowledge of the Irish language in all its shades of meaning and idiomatic beauty, as did this once flourishing class of animals. Nor were they confined to the Irish tongue alone, many of them understood English too; and it was said of those that belonged to a convent, the members of which, in their intercourse with each other, spoke only in Latin, that they were tolerable masters of that language, and refused to leave a potato field or plot of cabbages, except when addressed in it. To the English tongue, however, they had a deep-rooted antipathy; whether it proceeded from the national feeling, or the fact of its not being sufficiently guttural, I cannot say: but be this as it may, it must be admitted that they were excellent Irish scholars, and paid a surprising degree

of deference and obedience to whatever was addressed to them in their own language. In Munster, too, such of them as belonged to the hedge-schoolmasters were good proficients in Latin; but it is on a critical knowledge of their native tongue that I take my stand. On this point they were unrivalled by the most learned pigs or antiquarians of their day; none of either class possessing, at that period, such a knowledge of Irish manners, nor so keen a sagacity in tracing out Irish *roots*.

Their education, it is true, was not neglected, and their instructors had the satisfaction of seeing that it was not lost. Nothing could present a finer display of true friendship founded upon a sense of equality, mutual interest, and good-will, than the Irishman and his pig. The Arabian and his horse are proverbial; but had our English neighbours known as much of Ireland as they did of Arabia, they would have found as signal instances of attachment subsisting between the former as between the latter; and, perhaps, when the superior comforts of an Arabian hut are contrasted with the squalid poverty of an Irish cabin, they would have perceived a heroism and a disinterestedness evinced by the Irish parties, that would have struck them with greater admiration.

The pigs, however, of the present day are a fat, gross, and degenerate breed; and more like well-fed aldermen than Irish pigs of the old school. They are, in fact, a proud, lazy, carnal race, entirely of the earth, earthy. John Bull assures us it is one comfort, however, that we do not eat, but ship them out of the country; yet, after all, with great respect to John, it

is not surprising that we should repine a little on thinking of the good old times of sixty years since, when every Irishman could kill his own pig, and eat it when he pleased. We question much whether any measure that might make the eating of meat compulsory upon us, would experience from Irishmen a very decided opposition. But it is very condescending in John to eat our beef and mutton; and as he happens to want both, it is particularly disinterested in him to encourage us in the practice of self-denial. It is possible, however, that we may ultimately refuse to banquet by proxy on our own provisions; and that John may not be much longer troubled to eat for us in that capacity.

The education of an Irish pig, at the time of which we write, was an important consideration to an Irishman. He, and his family, and his pig, like the Arabian and his horse, all slept in the same bed; the pig generally, for the sake of convenience, next the "stock." At meals the pig usually was stationed at the *scrahag*, or potato-basket; where the only instances of bad-temper he ever displayed broke out in petty and unbecoming squabbles with the younger branches of the family. Indeed, if he ever descended from his high station as a member of the domestic circle, it was upon these occasions, when, with a want of dignity, accounted for only by the grovelling motive of self-interest, he embroiled himself in a series of miserable feuds and contentions about scraping the pot, or carrying off from the jealous urchins about him more than came to his share. In these heart-burnings about the good things of this world, he was treated

with uncommon forbearance: in his master he always had a friend, from whom, when he grunted out his appeal to him, he was certain of receiving redress: "Barney, behave, avick: lay down the potstick, an' don't be batin' the pig, the crathur."

In fact, the pig was never mentioned but with this endearing epithet of "crathur" annexed. "Barney, go an' call home the pig, the crathur, to his dinner, before it gets cowld an him." "Barney, go an' see if you can see the pig, the crathur, his buckwhist will soon be ready." "Barney, run an' dhrive the pig, the crathur, out of Larry Neil's phatie-field: an', Barney, whisper, a bouchal bawn, don't run *too* hard, Barney, for fraid you'd lose your breath. What if the crathur *does* get a taste o' the new phaties—small blame to him for the same!"

In short, whatever might have been the habits of the family, such were those of the pig. The latter was usually out early in the morning to take exercise, and the unerring regularity with which he returned at meal time, gave sufficient proof that procuring an appetite was a work of supererogation on his part. If he came before the meal was prepared, his station was at the door, which they usually shut to keep him out of the way until it should be ready. In the mean time, so far as a forenoon serenade and an indifferent voice could go, his powers of melody were freely exercised on the outside. But he did not stop here: every stretch of ingenuity was tried by which a possibility of gaining admittance could be established. The hat and rags were repeatedly driven in from the windows, which from practice and habit he was enabled to

approach on his hind legs; a cavity was also worn by the frequent grubbings of his snout under the door, the lower part of which was broken away by the sheer strength of his tusks, so that he was enabled, by thrusting himself between the bottom of it and the ground, to make a most unexpected appearance on the hearth, before his presence was at all convenient or acceptable.

But, independently of these two modes of entrance, i. e. the door and window, there was also a third, by which he sometimes scrupled not to make a descent upon the family. This was by the chimney. There are many of the Irish cabins built for economy's sake against slopes in the ground, so that the labour of erecting either a gable or side-wall is saved by the perpendicular bank that remains after the site of the house is scooped away. Of the facilities presented by this peculiar structure, the pig never failed to avail himself. He immediately mounted the roof, (through which, however, he sometimes took an unexpected flight,) and traversing it with caution, reached the chimney, into which he deliberately *backed* himself, and, with no small share of courage, went down precisely as the northern bears are said to descend the trunks of trees during the winter, but with far different motives.

In this manner he cautiously retrograded downwards with a hardihood which set furze bushes, brooms, tongs, and all other available weapons of the cabin at defiance. We are bound, however, to declare, that this mode of entrance, which was only resorted to when every other failed, was usually received by

the cottager and his family with a degree of mirth and good humour that were not lost upon the sagacity of the pig. In order to save him from being scorched, which he deserved for his temerity, they usually received him in a creel, often in a quilt, and sometimes in the tattered blanket, or large pot, out of which he looked with a humorous conception of his own enterprise, that was highly diverting. We must admit, however, that he was sometimes received with the comforts of a hot poker, which Paddy pleasantly called, "givin' him a *warm* welcome."

Another trait in the character of these animals, was the utter scorn with which they treated all attempts to fatten them. In fact, the usual consequences of good feeding were almost inverted in their case; and although I might assert that they became leaner in proportion to what they received, yet I must confine myself to truth, by stating candidly that this was not the fact; that there was a certain state of fleshlessness to which they arrived, but from which they neither advanced nor receded by good feeding or bad.

At this point, despite of all human ingenuity, they remained stationary for life, received the bounty afforded them with a greatness of appetite resembling the fortitude of a brave man, which rises in energy according to the magnitude of that which it has to encounter. The truth is, they were scandalous hypocrites; for with the most prodigious capacity for food, they were spare as philosophers, and fitted evidently more for the chase than the sty; rather to run down a buck or a hare for the larder, than to have a place in it themselves. If you starved them, they defied

you to diminish their flesh; and if you stuffed them like aldermen, they took all they got, but disdained to carry a single ounce more than if you gave them whey thickened with water. In short, they gloried in maceration and liberty; were good Irish scholars, sometimes acquainted with Latin; and their flesh, after the trouble of separating it from a superfluity of tough skin, was excellent *venison* so far as it went.

Now Phil Purcel, whom we will introduce more intimately to the reader by and by, was the son of a man who always kept a pig. His father's house had a small loft, to which the ascent was by a step-ladder through a door in the inside gable. The first good thing ever Phil was noticed for was said upon the following occasion. His father happened to be called upon, one morning before breakfast, by his landlord, who it seems occasionally visited his tenantry to encourage, direct, stimulate, or reprove them, as the case might require. Phil was a boy then, and sat on the hob in the corner, eyeing the landlord and his father during their conversation. In the mean time the pig came in, and deliberately began to ascend the ladder with an air of authority that marked him as one in the exercise of an established right. The landlord was astonished at seeing the animal enter the best room in the house, and could not help expressing his surprise to old Purcel:

"Why, Purcel, is your pig in the habit of treating himself to the comforts of your best room?"

"The pig is it, the crathur? Why, your haner," said Purcel, after a little hesitation, "it sometimes goes up of a mornin' to waken the childhre, particu-

larly when the buckwist happens to be late. It doesn't like to be waitin'; and sure none of us likes to be kept from the male's mate, your haner, when we want it, no more than it, the crathur."

"But I wonder your wife permits so filthy an animal to have access to her rooms in this manner."

"Filthy!" replied Mrs. Purcel, who felt herself called upon to defend the character of the pig, as well as her own, "why one would think, Sir, that any crathur that's among Christyeen childhre, like one o' themselves, couldn't be filthy. I could take it to my dyin' day, that there's not a claner or dacenter pig in the kingdom, than the same pig. It never misbehaves, the crathur, but goes out, as wise an' riglar, jist by a look, an' that's enough for it, any day—a single look, your haner, the poor crathur!"

"I think," observed Phil, from the hob, "that nobody has a betther right to the run of the house, whedher up stairs or down stairs, *than him that pays the rint.*"

"Well said, my lad!" observed the landlord, laughing at the quaint ingenuity of Phil's defence. "His payment of the rent is the best defence possible, and no doubt should cover a multitude of his errors."

"A multitude of his shins you mane, Sir," said Phil, "for thrath he's all shin."

In fact, Phil from his infancy had an uncommon attachment to these animals, and by a mind naturally shrewd and observing, made himself as intimately acquainted with their habits and instincts, and the best modes of managing them, as ever the celebrated

Cahir na Cappul did with those of the horse. Before he was fifteen he could drive the most vicious and obstinate pig as quietly before him as a lamb; yet no one knew how, nor by what means he had gained the secret that enabled him to do it. Whenever he attended a fair, his time was principally spent among the pigs, where he stood handling, and examining, and pretending to buy them, although he seldom had half-a-crown in his pocket. At length, by hoarding up such small sums as he could possibly lay his hands on, he got together the price of a "slip," which he bought, reared, and educated in a manner that did his ingenuity great credit. When this was brought to its *ne plus ultra* of fatness, he sold it, and purchased two more, which he fed in the same way. On disposing of these, he made a fresh purchase, and thus proceeded, until, in the course of a few years, he was a well-known pig-jobber.

Phil's journeys as a pig-driver to the leading seaport towns nearest him, were always particularly profitable. In Ireland swine are not kept in sties, as they are among English feeders, but permitted to go at liberty through pasture fields, commons, and along roadsides, where they make up as well as they can for the scanty pittance allowed them at home during meal times. We do not, however, impeach Phil's honesty; but simply content ourselves with saying, that when his journey was accomplished, he mostly found the original number with which he had set out increased by three or four, and sometimes to half-a-dozen. Pigs in general resemble each other, and it surely was not Phil's fault if a stray one, feeding on

the roadside or common, thought proper to join his flock and see the world. Phil's object, we presume, was only to take care that his original number was not diminished, its increase being a matter in which he felt little concern.

He now determined to take a professional trip to England, and that this might be the more productive, he resolved to purchase a drove of the animals we have been describing. No time was lost in this speculation. The pigs were bought up as cheaply as possible, and Phil set out, for the first time in his life, to try with what success he could measure his skill against that of a Yorkshireman. On this occasion, he brought with him a pet, which he had with considerable pains trained up for purposes hereafter to be explained.

There was nothing remarkable in the passage, unless that every creature on board was sea-sick, except the pigs; even to them, however, the change was a disagreeable one; for to be pent up in the hold of a ship was a deprivation of liberty, which, fresh as they were from their native hills, they could not relish. They felt, therefore, as patriots, a loss of freedom, but not a whit of appetite; for, in truth, of the latter no possible vicissitude short of death could deprive them.

Phil, however, with an assumed air of simplicity absolutely stupid, disposed of them to a Yorkshire dealer, at about twice the value they would have brought in Ireland, though as pigs went in England it was low enough. He declared that they had been fed on *tip-top* feeding; which was literally true, as

he afterwards admitted that the tops of nettles and potato stalks constituted the only nourishment they had got for three weeks before.

The Yorkshireman looked with great contempt upon what he considered a miserable essay to take him in.

"What a fule this Hirishmun mun bea;" said he, "to think to teake me in! Had he said that them there Hirish swoine were *badly* feade, I'd ha' thought it fairish enough on un; but to seay that they was oll weal feade on *tip-top* feeadin'! Nea, nea! I knaws weal enough that they was noat feade on nothin' at oll, which meakes them looak so poorish! Howsomever, I shall fatten them, I'se warrant—I'se warrant I shall!"

When driven home to sties somewhat more comfortable than the cabins of unfortunate Irishmen, they were well supplied with food which would have been very often considered a luxury by poor Paddy himself, much less by his pigs.

"Measter," said the boor who had seen them fed, "them there Hirish pigs ha' not teasted nout for a moonth yet: they feade like nout I never seed o' my laife!!"

"Ay! ay!" replied the master, "I'se warrant they'll soon fatten—I'se warrant they shall, Hodge—they be praime feeders—I'se warrant they shall; and then, Hodge, we've bit the soft Hirishmun."

Hodge gave a knowing look at his master, and grinned at this observation.

The next morning Hodge repaired to the sties to see how they were thriving; when, to his great con-

sternation, he found the feeding troughs clean as if they had been washed, and not a single Irish pig to be seen or heard about the premises; but to what retreat the animals could have betaken themselves, was completely beyond his comprehension. He scratched his head, and looked about him in much perplexity:

"Dang un!" he exclaimed, "I never seed nout like this."

He would have proceeded in a strain of cogitation equally enlightened, had not a noise of shouting, alarm, and confusion in the neighbourhood, excited his attention. He looked about him, and to his utter astonishment saw that some extraordinary commotion prevailed, that the country was up, and the hills alive with people, who ran, and shouted, and wheeled at full flight in all possible directions. His first object was to join the crowd, which he did as soon as possible, and found that the pigs he had shut up the preceding night in sties whose enclosures were at least four feet high, had cleared them like so many *chamois*, and were now closely pursued by the neighbours, who rose *en masse* to hunt down and secure such dreadful depredators.

The waste and mischief they had committed in one night were absolutely astonishing. Bean and turnip fields, and vegetable enclosures of all descriptions, kitchen-gardens, corn-fields, and even flower-gardens, were rooted up and destroyed with an appearance of system which would have done credit to Terry Alt himself.

Their speed was the theme of every tongue. Hedges were taken in their flight, and cleared in a style that

occasioned the country people to turn up their eyes, and scratch their thick incomprehensive heads in wonder. Dogs of all degrees bit the dust, and were caught up dead in stupid amazement by their owners, who began to doubt whether or not these extraordinary animals were swine at all. The depredators in the mean time had adopted the Horatian style of battle. Whenever there was an ungenerous advantage taken in the pursuit, by slipping dogs across or before their path, they shot off at a tangent through the next crowd, many of whom they prostrated in their flight; by this means they escaped the dogs until the latter were somewhat exhausted, when, on finding one in advance of the rest, they turned, and, with standing bristles and burning tusks, fatally checked their pursuer in his full career. To wheel and fly until another got in advance, was then the plan of fight; but, in fact, the conflict was conducted on the part of the Irish pigs with a fertility of expediency that did credit to their country, and established for those who displayed it, the possession of intellect far superior to that of their opponents. The pigs now began to direct their course towards the sties in which they had been so well fed the night before. This being their last flight, they radiated towards one common centre, with a fierceness and celerity that occasioned the women and children to take shelter within doors. On arriving at the sties, the ease with which they shot themselves over the four feet walls was incredible. The farmer had caught the alarm, and just came out in time to witness their return; he stood with his hands driven down into the pockets of his red,

capacious waistcoat, and uttered not a word. When the last of them came bounding into the sty, Hodge approached, quite breathless and exhausted :

" Oh, measter," he exclaimed, " these be not Hirish pigs at oll, they be Hirish deevils ; and yau mun ha' bought 'em fra a cunning mon!"

" Hodge," replied his master, " I'se be bit—I'se heard feather talk about un. That breed's *true* Hirish ; but I'se try and sell 'em to Squoire Jolly to hunt wi' as beagles, for he wants a pack. They do say all the swoine that the deevils were put into ha' been drawned ; but for my peart, I'se sure that some on un must ha' escaped to Hireland."

Phil, during the commotion excited by his knavery in Yorkshire, was traversing the country, in order to dispose of his remaining pig ; and the manner in which he effected his first sale of it was as follows :—

A gentleman was one evening standing with some labourers by the way side when a tattered Irishman, equipped in a pair of white dusty brogues, stockings without feet, old patched breeches, a bag slung across his shoulder, his coarse shirt lying open about a neck tanned by the sun into a reddish yellow, a hat nearly the colour of the shoes, and a hay rope tied for comfort about his waist : in one hand he also held a straw rope, that depended from the hind leg of a pig which he drove before him ; in the other was a cudgel, by the assistance of which he contrived to limp on after it, his two shoulder blades rising and falling alternately with a shrugging motion that indicated great fatigue.

When he came opposite where the gentleman stood

he checked the pig, which instinctively commenced feeding upon the grass by the edge of the road.

" Och," said he, wiping his brow with the cuff of his coat, " *mavrone orth a amuck*,* but I'm kilt wit you. Musha, Gad bless yer haner, an' maybe ye'd buy a slip of a pig fwhrom me, that has my heart bruck, so she has, if ever any body's heart was bruck wit the likes of her; an' sure so there was, no doubt, or I wouldn't be as I am wit her. I'll give her a dead bargain, Sir; for it's only to get her aff av my hands I'm wantin', plase yer haner—*husth amuck—husth, a veehonee!*† Be asy, an' me in conwersation wit his haner here!"

" You are an Irishman?" the gentleman inquired.

" I am, Sir, from Cannaught, yer haner, an' 'ill sell the crathur dag cheap, all out. Asy, you thief!"

" I don't want the pig, my good fellow," replied the Englishman, without evincing curiosity enough to inquire how he came to have such a commodity for sale.

" She'd be the darlint in no time wit you, Sir; the run o' your kitchen 'ud make her up a beauty, your haner, along wit no throuble to the sarwints about sweepin' it, or any thing. You'd only have to lay down the *scrahag* on the flure, or the misthress, Gad bliss her, could do it, an' not lave a crumblin' behind her, besides sleepin, your haner, in the carner beyant, if she'd take the throuble."

The sluggish phlegm of the Englishman was stirred

* My sorrow on you for a pig.

† Silence, pig! Silence, you vagabond!

up a little by the twisted, and somewhat incomprehensible nature of these instructions.

"How far do you intend to proceed to-night, Paddy?" said he.

"The sarra one o' myself knows, plaze yer haner: sure we've an ould sayin' of our own in Ireland beyant—that he's a wise man can tell how far he'll go, Sir, till he comes to his journey's ind. I'll give this crathur to you at more nor her value, yer haner."

"More!—why the man knows not what he's saying," observed the gentleman; "*less* you mean, I suppose, Paddy?"

"More or less, Sir: you'll get her a bargain; an' Gad bless you, Sir!"

"But it is a commodity which I don't want at present. I am very well stocked with pigs, as it is. Try elsewhere."

"She'd flog the counthry side, Sir; an' if the mishthress herself, Sir, 'ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the kitchen, Sir, near the whoire. Yer haner could spake to her about it; an' in no time put a knife in her whin you plazed. In regard o' the other thing, Sir—she's like a Christyeen, yer haner, an' no throuble, Sir, if you'd be seein' company or any thing."

"It's an extraordinary pig, this of yours."

"It's no lie fwhor you, Sir; she's as clane an' dacent a crathur, Sir! Och, if the same pig 'ud come into the care o' the misthress, Gad bliss her! an' I'm sure if she has as much gudness in her face as the hanerable *dinnha ousahl*—the handsome gintleman she's married upon!—you'll have her thrivin'

bravely, Sir, shartly, plase Gad, if you'll take courage. Will I dhrive her up the aveny fwhor you, Sir? A good gintlewoman I'm sure, is the same mishtriss! Will I dhrive her up fwhor you, Sir? *Shadh amuck —shadh dherim!*" *

"No, no; I have no further time to lose; you may go forward."

"Thank yer haner: is it whorid tourst the house abow, Sir? I wouldn't be standin' up, Sir, wit you about a thrifle; an' you'll have her, Sir, fwhor any thing you plase beyant a pound, yer haner; an' 'tis throwin' her away it is: but one can't be hard wit a rale gintleman, any way."

"You only annoy me, man; besides I don't want the pig; you lose time; I don't want to buy it, I repeat to you."

"Gad bliss you, Sir—Gad bliss you! Maybe if I'd make up to the mishthress, yer haner! Thrath she wouldn't turn the crathur from the place, in regard that the tindherness ow the feelin' would come ower her—the rale gintlewoman, any way! 'Tis dag chape you have her at what I said, Sir; an' Gad bliss you!"

"Do you want to compel me to purchase it whether I will or no?"

"Thrath, it's whor next to nothin' I'm givin' her to you, Sir; but sure you can make your own price at any thing beyant a pound. *Hurrish amuck—stadh anish!*—be asy, you crathur, sure you're gettin' into good quarthers, any how — goin' to the hanerable English gintleman's kitchen; an' Gad knows it's a

* Behave yourself, pig—behave, I say.

pleasure to dale wit 'em. Och, the world's differ there is betuxt thim an' our own dirty Irish buckeens, that 'ud shkin a bad skilleen, an' pay their debts wit the remaindher. The gateman 'ud let me in, yer haner, an' I'll meet you at the big house abow."

"Upon my honour this is a good jest," said the gentleman, absolutely teased into compliance; "you are forcing me to buy that which I don't want."

"Sure you will, Sir; you'll want more nor that yit, plase Gad, if you be spared. Come, amuck—come, you crathur; faix, you're in luck so you are—gettin' so good a place wit his haner here, that you won't know yourself shortly, plase Gad."

He immediately commenced driving his pig towards the gentleman's residence with such an air of utter simplicity as would have imposed upon any man not guided by direct inspiration. Whilst he approached the house, its proprietor arrived there by another path a few minutes before him, and, addressing his lady, said,

"My dear, will you come and look at a purchase which an Irishman has absolutely compelled me to make. You had better come and see himself too, for he is the greatest simpleton of an Irishman I have ever seen."

The lady's curiosity was more easily excited than that of her husband. She not only came out, but brought with her some ladies who had been on a visit, in order to hear the Irishman's brogue, and to amuse themselves at his expense. Of the pig, too, it appeared she was determined to know something.

"George, my love, is the pig also from Ireland?"

"I don't know, my dear; but I should think so from its fleshless appearance. I have never seen so spare an animal of that class in this country."

"Juliana," said one of the ladies to her companion, "don't go too near him. Gracious! look at the bludgeon, or beam, or something he carries in his hand, to fight and beat the people, I suppose: yet," she added, putting up her glass, "the man is actually not ill-looking; and, though not so tall as the Irishman in Sheridan's Rivals, he is well made."

"His eyes are good," said her companion—"a bright grey and keen; and were it not that his nose is rather short and turned up, he would be human."

"George, my love," exclaimed the lady of the mansion, "he is like most Irishmen of his class that I have seen; indeed, scarcely so intelligent, for he *does* appear quite a simpleton, except, perhaps, a lurking kind of expression, which is a sign of their humour, I suppose. Don't you think so, my love?"

"No, my dear; I think him a bad specimen of the Irishman. Whether it is that he talks our language but imperfectly, or that he is a stupid creature, I cannot say; but in selling the pig just now, he actually told me that he would let me have it for *more* than it was worth."

"Oh, that was so laughable! We will speak to him, though."

The degree of estimation in which these civilized English held Phil was so low, that this conversation took place within a few yards of him, precisely as if he had been an animal of an inferior species, or one of the aborigines of New Zealand.

"Pray what is your name?" inquired the matron.

"Phadhrumshagh Corfuffle, plase yer haner: my fadher carrid the same name upon him. We're av the Corfuffles av Leatherum Laghy, my lady; but my granmudher was a Dornyeen, an' my own mudher, plase yer haner, was o' the Shudhurthaghans o' Ballymadoghy, my ladyship. *Stadh anish, amuck bradagh* —be asy, can't you, an' me in conwershation wit the beauty o' the world that I'm spakin' to."

"That's the Negus language," observed one of the young ladies, who affected to be a wit and a blue-stocking; "it's Irish and English mixed."

"Thrath, an' but that the handsome young lady's so purty," observed Phil, "I'd be sayin' myself that that's a quare remark upon a poor unlarned man; but, Gad bless her, she *is* so purty what can one say for lookin' an her!"

"The poor man, Adelaide, speaks as well as he can," replied the lady, rather reprovingly: "he is by no means so wild as one would have expected."

"Candidly speaking, much *tamer* than *I* expected," rejoined the wit. "Indeed, I meant the poor Irishman no offence."

"Where did you get the pig, friend? and how come you to have it for sale so far from home?"

"Fwhy it isn't whor sale, my lady," replied Phil, evading the former question; "the masther here, Gad bless him an' spare him to you, ma'am!—thrath an' it's his four quarthers that knew how to pick out a wife, any how, whor beauty an' all hanerable whormations o' grandheur—so he did; an' well he desarves you, my lady: faix, it's a fine houseful o' thim you'll

have, plase Gad—an' fwhy not? whin it's all in the coorse o' Providence, bein' both so handsome;—he gev me a pound note whor her, my ladyship, an' his own plisure aftherwards; an' I'm now watin' to be ped."

"What kind of a country is Ireland, as I understand you are an Irishman?"

"Thrath, my lady, it's like fwhat maybe you never seen—a fool's purse, ten guineas goin' out whor one that goes in."

"Upon my word that's wit," observed the young blue-stocking.

"What's your opinion of Irishwomen?" the lady continued; "are they handsomer than the English ladies, think you?"

"Murdher, my lady," says Phil, raising his caubeen, and scratching his head in pretended perplexity, with his finger and thumb, "fwhat am I to say to that, ma'am, and all of yees to the fwhore? But the sarra one av me will give it agin the darlins beyant."

"But which do you think the more handsome?"

"Thrath I do, my lady; the Irish and English women would flog the world, an' sure it would be a burnin' shame to go to set them agin one another fwhor beauty."

"Whom did you mean by the 'darlins beyant'?" inquired the blue-stocking, attempting to pronounce the words.

"Faix, Miss, who but the crathurs ower the wather, that kills us entirely, so they do."

"I cannot comprehend him," she added, to the lady of the mansion.

"Arrah, maybe I'd make bould to take up the manners from you fwhor a while, my lady, plase yer haner?" said Phil, addressing the latter.

"I do not properly understand you," she replied, "speak plainer."

"Throth, that's fwhat they do, yer haner; they never go about the bush wit yees—the gintlemen, ma'am, of our counthry, fwhin they do be coortin' yees; an' I want to ax, ma'am, if you plase, fwhat *you* think of *thim*, that is if ever any of them had the luck to come acrass you, my lady?"

"I have not been acquainted with many Irish gentlemen," she replied; "but I hear they are men of a remarkable character."

"Faix, 'tis you may say that," replied Phil; "sowl, my lady, 'tis well for the masther here, plase yer haner, Sir, that none o' them met wit the mishthress before you was both marrid, or, wit riverence be it spoken, 'tis the sweet side o' the tongue they'd be layin' upon you, ma'am, an' the rough side to the masther himself, along wit a few scrapes of a pen on a slip o' paper, jist to appoint the time and place, in regard of her ladyship's purty complexion—an' who can deny that, any way? Faix, ma'am, they've a way wit them, my counthrymin, that the ladies like well enough to thravel by. Asy, you deludher, an' me in conwersaytion wit the quality."

"I am quite anxious to know how you came by the pig, Paddy?" said the wit.

"Arrah, Miss, sure 'tisn't pigs you're thinkin' on, an' us discoorsin' about the gintlemen from Ireland, that you're all so fond ow here; faix, Miss, they're

the boys that can fwhoight for yees, an' 'ud rather be bringin' an Englishman to the *sad* fwhor your sakes, nor atin' bread an' butther. Fwhy, now, Miss, if you were beyant wit us, the sarra ounce o' gunpowdher we'd have in no time, for love or money."

"Upon my word I should like to *see* Ireland!" exclaimed the blue-stocking; "and why would the gunpowder get scarce, pray?"

"Faix, fightin' about you, Miss, an' all of yees sure; for myself sees no differ at all in your hanerable fwhormations of beauty an' grandeur, an' all high-flown admirations."

"But tell us where you got the pig, Paddy?" persisted the wit, struck naturally enough with the circumstance. "How do you come to have an Irish pig so far from home?"

"Fwhy thin, Miss, 'twas to a brodher o' my own I was bringin' it, that was livin' down the counthry here, an' fwhin I came to fwhere he lived, the sarra one o' me knew the place, in regard o' havin' forgot the name of it entirely, an' there was I wit the poor crathur an my hands, till his haner here bought it whrom me—Gad bless you, Sir!"

"As I live, there's a fine Irish blunder," observed the wit; "I shall put it in my common-place book—it will be so genuine. I declare I'm quite delighted!"

"Well, Paddy," said the gentleman, "here's your money. There's a pound for you, and that's much more than the miserable animal is worth."

"Thrath, Sir, you have the crathur at what we call in Ireland a bargain.* Maybe yer haner 'ud spit upon

* Ironically—a take in.

the money fwhor luck, Sir. It's the way we do, Sir, beyant."

"No, no, Paddy, take it as it is. Good heavens! what barbarous habits these Irish have in all their modes of life, and how far they are removed from any thing like civilization!"

"Thank yer haner. Faix, Sir, this'll come so handy for the landlord at home, in regard o' the rint for the bit o' phatie ground, so it will, if I can get home agin widout brakin' it. Arrah, maybe yer haner 'ud give me the price o' my bed, an' a bit to ate, Sir, an' keep me from brakin' in upon this, Sir, Gad bless the money! I'm thinkin' o' the poor wife an' childher, Sir—strivin', so I am, to do fwhor the darlins."

"Poor soul," said the lady, "he is affectionate in the midst of his wretchedness and ignorance."

"Here—here," replied the Englishman, anxious to get rid of him, "there's a shilling, which I give because you appear to be attached to your family."

"Och, och, fwhat can I say, Sir, only that long may you reign ower your family an' the hanerable ladies to the fwhore, Sir. Gad fwhor ever bliss you, Sir, but you're the kind, noble gintleman, an' all belongin' to you, Sir!"

Having received the shilling, he was in the act of departing, when, after turning it deliberately in his hand, shrugging his shoulders two or three times, and scratching his head, with a vacant face he approached the lady.

"Musha, ma'am, an' maybe ye'd have the tindherness in your heart, seein' that the gudness is in yer hanerable face, any way, an' it would save the skill-

yeen that the masther gev'd me for payin' my passage, so it would, jist to bid the steward, my ladyship, to ardher me a bit to ate in the kitchen below. The hunger, ma'am, is hard upon me, my lady; an' fwhat I'm doin', sure, is in regard o' the wife at home, an' the childher, the crathurs, an' me far fwhrom them, in a sthrange counthry, Gad help me!"

"What a singular being, George! and how beautifully is the economy of domestic affection exemplified, notwithstanding his half-savage state, in the little plans he devises for the benefit of his wife and children!" exclaimed the good lady, quite unconscious that Phil was a bachelor. "Juliana, my love, desire Simmons to give him his dinner. Follow this young lady, good man, and she will order you refreshment."

"Gad's blessin' upon your beauty an' gudness, my lady; an' a man might thravel far afore he'd meet the likes o' you for aither o' them. Is it the other handsome young lady I'm to folly, ma'am?"

"Yes," replied the young wit, with an arch smile; "come after *me*."

"Thrath, Miss, an' it's an asy task to do that, any way; wit a heart an' a half I go, acushla; an' I seen the day, Miss, that it's not much o' mate an' dhrink 'ud throuble me, if I jist got lave to be lookin' at you, wit nothin' but yourself to think an. But the wife an' childher, Miss, makes great changes in us entirely."

"Why you are quite gallant, Paddy."

"Thrath, I suppose I am now, Miss; but you see, my hauerable young lady, that's our fwhailin' at home: the counthry's poor, an' we can't help it,

whedher or not. We're fwhorced to it, Miss, whin we come ower here, by you, an' the likes o' you, ma-vourneen!"

Phil then proceeded to the house, was sent to the kitchen by the young lady, and furnished through the steward with an abundant supply of cold meat, bread, and beer, of which he contrived to make a meal that somewhat astonished the servants. Having satisfied his hunger, he deliberately, but with the greatest simplicity of countenance, filled the wallet which he carried slung across his back, with whatever he had left, observing as he did it:—

"Fwhy, thin, 'tis sthrange it is that the same custom is wit us in Ireland beyant that is here; fwhor whinever a thraveller is axed in, he always brings fwhat he doesn't ate along wit him. An sure enough it's the same here amongst yees," he added, packing up the bread and beef as he spoke, "but Gad bliss the custom, any how, fwhor it's a good one!"

When he had secured the provender, and was ready to resume his journey, he began to yawn, and to exhibit the most unequivocal symptoms of fatigue:

"Arrah, Sir," said he to the steward, "you wouldn't have e'er an ould barn that I'd throw myself in fwhor the night? The sarra leg I have to put undher me, now that I've got stiff wit the sittin' so lang;* that, an' a wishp o' sthraw, Sir, to sleep an, an' Gad bliss you!"

"Paddy, I cannot say," replied the steward; "but I shall ask my master, and if he orders it, you shall

* This is pronounced as in the first syllable of "Langolee," —not like the Scotch "lang."

have the comfort of a hard floor and clean straw Paddy—that you shall."

"Many thanks to you, Sir: it's in your face, in thrath, the same gudness an' ginerosity."

The gentleman, on hearing Phil's request to be permitted a sleeping place in the barn, was rather surprised at his wretched notion of comfort than at the request itself.

"Certainly, Timmins, let him sleeep there," he replied; "give him sacks and straw enough. I dare say he will feel the privilege a luxury, poor devil, after his fatigue. Give him his breakfast in the morning, Timmins. Good heavens," he added, "what a singular people! What an amazing progress civilization must make before these Irish can be brought at all near the commonest standard of humanity!"

At this moment Phil, who was determined to back the steward's request, approached them.

"Paddy," said the gentleman, anticipating him, "I have ordered you sacks and straw in the barn, and your breakfast in the morning before you set out."

"Thrath," said Phil, "if there's e'er a sthray blissin' goin', depind an it, Sir, you'll get it, fwhor your hanerable ginerosity to the sthranger. But about the 'slip,' Sir—if the misthress herself 'ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the far carner o' the kitchen below, an' see her gettin' her supper, the crathur, before she'd put her to bed, she'd be thrivin' like a salmon, Sir, in less than no time; an' to ardher the sarwints, Sir, if you plase, not to be defraudin' the crathur of the big piatees. Fwhor in

regard it cannot spake fwhor itself, Sir, it frets as wise as a Christyeen, when it's not honestly thrated."

"Never fear, Paddy; we shall take good care of it."

"Thank you, Sir. But I aften heerd, Sir, that you dunna how to feed pigs in this counthry in ardher to mix the fwhat an' lane, lair (layer) about."

"And how do you manage that in Ireland, Paddy?"

"Fwhy, Sir, I'll tell you how the mishthress, Gad bliss her, will manage it fwhor you: Take the crathur, Sir, an' feed it to-morrow till it's as full as a tick—that's fwhor the *fwhat*, Sir; thin let her give it nothin' at all the next day, but keep it black fwhastin'—that's fwhor the *lane* (lean). Let her stick to that, Sir, keepin' it atin one day an fastin' anodher, for six months, thin put a knife in it, an' if you don't have the fwhat an' lane, lair about, beautiful all out, fwhy niver bl'eve Phadrumshagh Corfuffle agin. Ay, indeed!"

The Englishman looked keenly at Phil, but could only read in his countenance a thorough and implicit belief in his own recipe for mixing the fat and lean. It is impossible to express his contempt for the sense and intellect of Phil; nothing could surpass it but the contempt which Phil entertained for him.

"Well," said he to the servant, "I have often heard of the barbarous habits of the Irish, but I must say that the incidents of this evening have set my mind at rest upon the subject. Good heavens! when will ever this besotted country rise in the scale of nations! Did ever a human being hear of such a method of feeding swine! I should have thought it incredible had I heard it from any but an Irishman!"

Phil then retired to the kitchen, where his assumed simplicity highly amused the servants, who, after an hour or two's fun with "Paddy," conducted him in a kind of contemptuous procession to the barn, where they left him to his repose.

The next morning he failed to appear at the hour of breakfast, but his non-appearance was attributed to his fatigue, in consequence of which he was supposed to have over-slept himself. On going, however, to call him from the barn, they discovered that he had decamped; and on looking after the "slip" it was found that both had taken French leave of the Englishman. Phil and the pig had actually travelled fifteen miles that morning, before the hour on which he was missed—Phil going at a dog's trot, and the pig following at such a respectful distance as might not appear to identify them as fellow-travellers. In this manner Phil sold the pig to upwards of two dozen intelligent English gentlemen and farmers, and after winding up his bargains successfully, both arrived in Liverpool, highly delighted by their commercial trip through England.

The passage from Liverpool to Dublin, in Phil's time, was far different from that which steam and British enterprise have since made it. A vessel was ready to sail for the latter place on the very day of Phil's arrival in town; and, as he felt rather anxious to get out of England as soon as he could, he came, after selling his pig in good earnest, to the aforesaid vessel to ascertain if it were possible to get a deck passage. The year had then advanced to the latter part of autumn; so that it was the season when those

inconceivable hordes of Irishmen who emigrate periodically for the purpose of lightening John Bull's labour, were in the act of returning to that country in which they find little to welcome them—but domestic affection and misery.

When Phil arrived at the vessel, he found the captain in a state of peculiar difficulty. About twelve or fourteen gentlemen of rank and property, together with a score or upwards of highly respectable persons, but of less consideration, were in equal embarrassment. The fact was, that as no other vessel left Liverpool that day, about five hundred Irishmen, mostly reapers and mowers, had crowded upon deck, each determined to keep his place at all hazards. The captain, whose vessel was small, and none of the stoutest, flatly refused to put to sea with such a number. He told them it was madness to think of it; he could not risk the lives of the other passengers, nor even their own, by sailing with five hundred on the deck of so small a vessel. If the one half of them would withdraw peaceably, he would carry the other half, which was as much as he could possibly accomplish. They were very willing to grant that what he said was true; but in the mean time, not a man of them would move, and to clear out such a number of fellows, who loved nothing better than fighting, armed, too, with sickles and scythes, was a task beyond either his ability or inclination to execute. He remonstrated with them, entreated, raged, swore, and threatened, but all to no purpose. His threats and entreaties were received with equal good humour. Gibes and jokes were broken on him without number,

and as his passion increased, so did their mirth, until nothing could be seen but the captain in vehement gesticulation, the Irishmen huzzaing him so vociferously, that his damns and curses, uttered against them, could not reach even his own ears.

"Gentlemen," said he to his cabin passengers, "for the love of Heaven, tax your invention to discover some means whereby to get one-half of these men out of the vessel, otherwise it will be impossible that we can sail to-day. I have already proffered to take one-half of them by lot, but they will not hear of it; and how to manage I am sure I don't know."

The matter, however, was beyond their depth; the thing seemed utterly impracticable, and the chances of their putting to sea were becoming fainter and fainter.

"Bl—t their eyes!" he at length exclaimed, "the ragged, hungry devils! If they heard me with decency I could bear their obstinacy better: but no, they must turn me into ridicule, and break their jests, and turn their cursed barbarous grins upon me in my own vessel. I say, boys," he added, proceeding to address them once more—"I say, savages, I have just three observations to make. The first is,"——

"Arrah, Captain, avourneen, had'nt you betther get upon a stool," said a voice, "an' put a text before it, thin divide it dacently into three halves, an' make a sarmon of it."

"Captain, you wor intinded for the church," added another. You're the moral* of a Methodist preacher, if you wor dressed in black."

* Model.

" Let him alone," said a third, " he'd be a jinteel man enough in a wildherness, an' 'ud make an illigant dancin'-masther to the bears."

" He's as graceful as a shaved pig on its hind legs, dancin' the ' Baltihorum Jig.' "

The captain's face was literally black with passion: he turned away with a curse, which produced another huzza, and swore that he would rather encounter the bay of Biscay in a storm, than have any thing to do with such an unmanageable mob.

" Captain," said a little, shrewd-looking Connaught man, " what 'ud you be willin' to give any body, over an' abow his free passage, that 'ud tell you how to get one half o' them out?"

" I'll give him a crown," replied the captain, " together with grog and rations to the eyes: I'll be hanged if I don't.

" Thin I'll do it fwhor you, Sir, if you keep your word wit me."

" Done," said the Captain, " it's a bargain, my good fellow, if you accomplish it; and, what's more, I'll consider you a knowing one."

" I'm a poor Cannaught man, your haner," replied our friend Phil, " but what's to prevint me thryin'? Tell thim," he continued, " that you *must* go; purtind to be fwhor takin' thim wit you, Sir. Put Munshther agin Cannaught, one half an this side, an' the odher an that, to keep the crathur of a ship steady, your haner; an' fwhin you have thim half an' half, wit a little room betuxt thim, ' now,' says your haner, ' boys, you're divided into two halves; if one side

kicks the other out o' the ship, I'll bring the cunquirors."

The captain said not a word in reply to Phil, but immediately ranged the Munster and Connaught men on each side of the deck—a matter which he found little difficulty in accomplishing, for each party, hoping that he intended to take themselves, readily declared their Province, and stood together. When they were properly separated, there still remained about forty or fifty persons belonging to neither province; but, at Phil's suggestion, the captain paired them off to each division, man for man, until they were drawn up into two bodies.

"Now," said he, "there you stand: let one half of you drub the other out of the vessel, and the conquerors shall get their passage."

Instant was the struggle that ensued for the sake of securing a passage, and from the anxiety to save a shilling, by getting out of Liverpool on that day. The saving of the shilling is indeed a consideration with Paddy which drives him to the various resources of begging, claiming kindred with his resident countrymen in England, pretended illness, coming to be passed from parish to parish, and all the turnings and shiftings which his reluctance to part with money renders necessary. Another night, therefore, and probably another day in Liverpool would have been attended with expense. This argument prevailed with all: with Munster as well as with Connaught, and they fought accordingly.

When the attack first commenced, each party hoped

Designed & Etched by W.H.Brooke F.S.A

In a moment fists & cudgels — reaping hooks & scythes were at work.!

to be able to expel the other without blows. This plan was soon abandoned. In a few minutes the sticks and fists were busy. Throttling, tugging, cuffing, and knocking down — shouting, hallooing, huzzaing, and yelling, gave evident proofs that the captain, in embracing Phil's proposal, had unwittingly applied the match to a mine, whose explosion was likely to be attended with disastrous consequences. As the fight became warm, and the struggle more desperate, the hooks and scythes were resorted to; blood began to flow, and men to fall, disabled and apparently dying. The immense crowd which had now assembled to witness the fight among the Irishmen, could not stand tamely by, and see so many lives likely to be lost, without calling in the civil authorities. A number of constables in a few minutes attended; but these worthy officers of the civil authorities experienced very uncivil treatment from the fists, cudgels, and sickles of *both* parties. In fact, they were obliged to get from among the rioters with all possible celerity, and to suggest to the magistrates the necessity of calling in the military.

In the mean time the battle rose into a furious and bitter struggle for victory. The deck of the vessel was actually slippery with blood, and many were lying in an almost lifeless state. Several were pitched into the hold, and had their legs and arms broken by the fall; some were tossed over the sides of the vessel, and only saved from drowning by the activity of the sailors; and not a few of those who had been knocked down in the beginning of the fray were trampled into insensibility.

The Munster men at length gave way; and their opponents, following up their advantage, succeeded in driving them to a man out of the vessel, just as the military arrived. Fortunately their interference was unnecessary. The ruffianly captain's object was accomplished; and as no lives were lost, nor any injury more serious than broken bones and flesh-wounds sustained, he got the vessel in readiness, and put to sea.

Who would not think that the Irish were a nation of misers, when our readers are informed that all this bloodshed arose from their unwillingness to lose a shilling by remaining in Liverpool another night? Or, who could believe that these very men, on reaching home, and meeting their friends in a fair or market, or in a public-house after mass on a Sunday, would sit down and spend, recklessly and foolishly, that very money which in another country they part with as if it were their very heart's blood? Yet, so it is! Unfortunate Paddy is wiser any where than at home, where wisdom, sobriety, and industry are best calculated to promote his own interests.

This slight sketch of Phil Purcel we have pre sented to our readers as a specimen of the low, cunning Connaughtman; and we have only to add, that neither the pig-selling scene, nor the battle on the deck of the vessel in Liverpool is fictitious. On the contrary, we have purposely kept the tone of our description of the latter circumstance beneath the reality. Phil, however, is not drawn as a general portrait, but as one of that knavish class of men called "jobbers," a description of swindlers, certainly not more common

in Ireland than in any other country. We have known Connaughtmen as honest and honourable as it was possible to be; yet there is a strong prejudice entertained against them in every other province of Ireland, as is evident by the old adage, "Never *trust* a Connaughtman."

THE

GEOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH OATH.

THE

GEOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH OATH.

PETER CONNELL was for many years of his life a pattern and a proverb, for industry and sobriety. He first began the world as keeper of a shebeen-house at the cross-roads, about four miles from the town of Ballypoteen. He was decidedly an honest man to his neighbours, but a knave to excisemen, whom he hated by a kind of instinct that he had, which prompted him, in order to satisfy his conscience, to render them every practicable injury within the compass of his ingenuity. Shebeen-house keepers and excisemen have been, time out of mind, destructive of each other; the exciseman pouncing like a beast or bird of prey upon the shebeen man and his illicit spirits; the shebeen man staving in the exciseman, like a barrel of doublings, by a knock from behind a hedge, which sometimes sent him to that world which is emphatically called the world of spirits. For this, it sometimes happened, that the shebeen man was hanged; but as his death only multiplied that of the

excisemen in a geometrical ratio, the sharp-scented fraternity resolved, if possible, not to risk their lives, either by exposing themselves to the necessity of travelling by night, or prosecuting by day. In this they acted wisely and prudently: fewer of the unfortunate peasantry were shot in their rencounters with the yeomanry or military, on such occasions, and the retaliations became by degrees less frequent, until, at length, the murder of a gauger became a rare occurrence in the country.

Peter, before his marriage, had wrought as labouring servant to a man who kept two or three private stills in those caverns among the remote mountains, to which the gauger never thought of penetrating, because he supposed that no human enterprise would have ever dreamt of advancing farther into them than appeared to *him* to be practicable. In this he was frequently mistaken; for though the still-house was in many cases inaccessible to horses, yet by the contrivance of *slipes*—a kind of sledge—a dozen men could draw a couple of sacks of barley with less trouble, and at a quicker pace, than if horses only had been employed. By this, and many other similar contrivances, the peasantry were often able to carry on the work of private distillation in places so distant, that few persons could suspect them as likely to be chosen for such purposes. The uncommon personal strength, the daring spirit, and great adroitness of Peter Connell, rendered him a very valuable acquisition to his master in the course of his illicit occupations. Peter was, in addition to his other qualities, sober and ready-witted, so that whenever the gauger

made his appearance, his expedients to baffle him were often inimitable. Those expedients did not, however, always arise from the exigency of the moment; they were often deliberately, and with much exertion of ingenuity, planned by the proprietors and friends of such establishments, perhaps for weeks before the gauger's visit occurred. But, on the other hand, as the gauger's object was to take them, if possible, by surprise, it frequently happened that his appearance was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. It was *then* that the prompt ingenuity of the people was fully seen, felt, and understood, by the baffled exciseman, who too often had just grounds for bitterly cursing their talent at outwitting him.

Peter served his master, as a kind of superintendent in such places, until he gained the full knowledge of distilling, according to the processes used by the most popular adepts in the art. Having acquired this, he set up as a professor, and had excellent business. In the mean time, he had put together by degrees a small purse of money, to the amount of about twenty guineas, no inconsiderable sum for a young Irishman who intends to begin the world on his own account. He accordingly married, and as the influence of a wife is usually not to be controlled during the honeymoon, Mrs. Connell prevailed on Peter to relinquish his trade of distiller, and to embrace some other mode of life that might not render their living so much asunder necessary. Peter suffered himself to be prevailed upon, and promised to have nothing more to do with private distillation, as a distiller. One of the greatest curses attending this lawless business, is

the idle and irregular habit of life which it gradually induces. Peter could not now relish the labour of an agriculturist to which he had been bred; and yet he was too prudent to sit down and draw his own and his wife's support from so exhaustible a source as twenty guineas. Two or three days passed, during which "he cudgelled his brains," to use his own subsequent expression, in plans for future subsistence; two or three consultations were held with Ellish, in which their heads were laid together, and, as it was still the honey-moon, the subject-matter of the consultation, of course, was completely forgotten. Before the expiration of a second month, however, they were able to think of many other things, in addition to the fondlings and endearments of a new-married couple. Peter was every day becoming more his own man, and Ellish by degrees more her own woman. "The purple light of love," which had changed Peter's red head into a rich auburn, and his swivel eye into a knowing wink, exceedingly irresistible in his bachelorship, as he made her believe, to the country girls—had passed away, taking the aforesaid auburn along with it, and leaving nothing but the genuine carrot behind. Peter, too, on opening his eyes one morning about the beginning of the third month, perceived that his wife was, after all, nothing more than a thumping red cheeked wench, with good eyes, a mouth rather large, and a nose very much resembling, in its curve, the seat of a saddle, allowing the top to correspond with the pummel.

"Pether," said she, "it's like a dhrame to me that you're neglectin' your business, alanna."

"Is it you, beauty? but, may be, you'd first point out to me what business, barrin' buttherin' up yourself, I have to mind, you phanix bright?"

"Quit yourself, Pether! it's time for you to give up your ould ways; you caught one bird wid them, an' that's enough. What do you intind to do? It's full time for you to be lookin' about you."

"Lookin' about me! What do you mane, Ellish?"

"The dickens a bit o' me thought of it," replied the wife, laughing at the unintentional allusion to the circumspect character of Peter's eyes,—"upon my faix, I didn't—ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, thin, but you're full o' your fun, sure enough, if that's what you're at. Maybe, avourneen, if I had looked right afore me, as I ought to do, it's Katty Murray an' her snug farm I'd have, instead of"—

Peter hesitated. The rapid feelings of a woman, and an Irishwoman, quick and tender, had come forth and subdued him. She had *not* voluntarily alluded to his eyes; but on seeing Peter offended, she immediately expressed that sorrow and submission which are most powerful when accompanied by innocence, and when meekly assumed to pacify rather than to convince. A tear started to her eye, and with a voice melted into unaffected tenderness, she addressed him, but he scarcely gave her time to speak.

"No, avourneen, no, I won't say what I was goin' to mintion. I won't indeed, Ellish, dear; an' forgive me for voundin' your feelins, *alanna dhas*. Hell resave her an' her farm! I dunna what put her into

my head at all; but I thought you wor jokin' me about my eyes: an' sure if you war, acushla, that's no rason that I'd not allow you to do that an' more wid your own Pether. Give me a *slewsther*,* agrah —a sweet one, now!"

He then laid his mouth to hers, and immediately a sound, nearly resembling a pistol-shot, was heard through every part of the house. It was, in fact, a kiss upon a scale of such magnitude and magnificence, that the Emperor of Morocco might not blush to be charged with it. A reconciliation took place, and in due time it was determined that Peter, as he understood poteen, should open a shebeen-house.

The moment this resolution was made, the wife kept coaxing him, until he took a small house at the cross-roads before alluded to, where, in the course of a short time, he was established, if not in his own line, yet in a mode of life approximating to it as nearly as the inclination of Ellish would permit. The cabin which they occupied had a kitchen in the middle, and a room at each end of it, in one of which was their own humble chaff bed, with its blue quilted drugget cover; in the other, stood a couple of small tables, some stools, a short form, and one chair, being a present from his father-in-law. These constituted Peter's whole establishment, so far as it defied the gauger. To this we must add a five-gallon keg of spirits hid in the garden, and a roll of smuggled tobacco. From the former he bottled, over night, as much as was usually drank the following day; and from the tobacco, which was also kept under ground, he cut,

* A kiss of fondness.

with the same caution, as much as to-morrow's exigencies might require. This he kept in his coat pocket, a place where the gauger would never think of searching for it, divided into halfpenny and pennyworths, ounces or half-ounces, according as it might be required; and as he had it without duty, the liberal spirit in which he dealt it out to his neighbours soon brought him a large increase of custom.

Peter's wife was an excellent manager, and he himself a pleasant, good-humoured man, full of whim and inoffensive mirth. His powers of amusement were of a high order, considering his station in life, and his want of education. These qualities contributed, in a great degree, to bring both the young and the old to his house during the long winter nights, in order to hear the fine racy humour with which he related his frequent adventures and battles with excisemen. In the summer evenings, he usually engaged a piper or fiddler, and had a dance, a contrivance by which he not only rendered himself popular, but increased his business.

In this mode of life, the greatest source of anxiety to Peter and Ellish was the difficulty of not offending their friends by refusing to give them credit. Many plans, were, with great skill and forethought, devised to obviate this evil; but all failed. A short board was first procured, on which they got written with chalk—

"No creditt giv'n—barrin' a thrifle to Pether's friends."

Before a week passed, after this intimation, the number of "Pether's friends" increased so rapidly, that

neither he nor Ellish knew the half of them. Every scamp in the parish was hand and glove with him: the drinking tribe, particularly, became desperately attached to him and Ellish. Peter was naturally kind-hearted, and found that his firmest resolutions too often gave way before the open flattery with which he was assailed. He then changed his hand, and left Ellish to bear the brunt of their blarney. Whenever any person or persons were seen approaching the house, Peter, if he had reason to suspect an attack upon his indulgence, prepared himself for a retreat. He kept his eye to the window, and if they turned from the direct line of the road, he immediately slipped into bed, and lay close in order to escape them. In the mean time they enter.

"God save all here! Ellish, agra machree, how are you?"

"God save you kindly! Faix, I'm middlin', I thank you, Condy: how is yourself, an' all at home?"

"Devil a heartier, barrin' my father, that's touched wid a loss of appetite afther his meals—ha, ha, ha!"

"Musha, the dickens be an you, Condy, but you're your father's son, any way; the best company in Europe is the same man. Throth, whether you're jokin' or not, I'd be sarry to hear of any thing to his disadvantage, dacent man. Boys, won't yees go down to the other room?"

"Go way wid yees, boys, till I spake to Ellish here about the affairs o' the nation. Why, Ellish, you stand the cut all to pieces. By the contints o' the book, you do; Pether doesn't stand it half so well. How is he, the thief?"

"Throth, he's not well to-day, in regard of a smotherin' about the heart he tuck this mornin' afther his breakfast. He jist laid himself on the bed a while, to see if it would go off of him—God be praised for all his marcies!"

"Thin, upon my *sole*vation, I'm sarry to hear it, and so will all at home, for there's not in the parish we're sittin' in a couple that our family has a greater regard an' friendship for, than him an' yourself. Faix, my modher, no longer ago than Friday night last, argued down Bartle Meegan's throath, that you and Biddy Martin war the two portliest weemen that comes into the chapel. God forgive myself, I was near quarrellin' wid Bartle, on the head of it, bekase I tuck my modher's part, as I had good right to do."

"Thrath I'm thankful to you both, Condy, for your kindness."

"Oh, the sarra taste o' kindness was in it at all, Ellish, 'twas only the truth; an' as long as I live, I'll stand up for that."

"Arrah, how is your aunt down at Carntall?"

"Indeed thin but middlin', not gettin' her health: she'll soon give the crow a puddin', any way; thin, Ellish, you thief, I'm *in* for the yallow boys. Do you know thim that came in wid me?"

"Why thin I can't say I do. Who are they, Condy?"

"Why one o' thim's a bachelor to my sisther Norah, a very dacent boy, indeed—him wid the frieze jock upon him, an' the buckskin breeches. The other three's from Tee nabraighera beyant. They're related to my brother-in-law, Mick Dillon,

by his first wife's brother-in-law's uncle. They're come to this neighbourhood till the 'Sizes, bad luck to them, goes over; for you see, they're in a little throuble."

"The Lord grant them safe out of it, poor boys!"

"I brought them up here to treat them, poor fellows; an' Ellish, avourneen, you must credit me for whatsomever we may have. The thruth is, you see, that when we left home, none of us had any notion of dhrinkin', or I'd a put something in my pocket, so that I'm taken at an average.—Bud-an'-age how is little Dan? Sowl, Ellish, that goorsoon, when he grows up, will be a credit to you. I don't think there's a finer child in Europe of his age, so there isn't."

"Indeed, he's a good child, Condy. But, Condy, avick, about givin' credit:—by thim five crasses, if I could give score to any boy in the parish, it 'ud be to yourself. It was only last night that I made a promise against doin' sich a thing for man or mortual. We're a'most broken an' harrish'd out o' house an' home by it; an' what's more, Condy, we intend to give up the business. The landlord's at us every day for his rint, an' we owe for the two last kegs we got, but hasn't a rap to meet aither o' thim; an' enough due to us if we co d get it together: an' whisper, Condy, atween ourselves, that's what ails Pether, although he doesn't wish to let an to any one about it."

"Well but you know I'm safe, Ellish?"

"I know you are, avourneen, as the bank itself; an' should have what you want wid a heart an' a

half, only for the promise I made an my two knees last night, aginst givin' credit to man or woman. Why the dickens didn't you come yistherday?"

"Didn't I tell you, woman alive, that it was by accident, an' that I wished to sarve the house, that we came at all. Come, come, Ellish; don't disgrace me afore my sisther's bachelor an' the sthrange boys that's to the fore. By this staff in my hand, I wouldn't for the best cow in our byre be put to the blush afore thim; an' besides, there's a *cleeveenship* atween your family an' ours."

"Condy, avourneen, say no more: if you were fed from the same breast wid me, I couldn't, nor wouldn't break my promise. I wouldn't have the sin of it an me for the wealth o' the three kingdoms."

"Bedad, you're a quare woman; an' only that my regard for you is great entirely, we would be two, Ellish; but I know you're dacent still."

He then left her, and joined his friends in the little room that was appropriated for drinking, where, with a great deal of mirth, he related the failure of the plan they had formed for outwitting Peter and Ellish.

"Boys," said he, "she's too many for us! St. Pether himself wouldn't make a hand of her. Faix, she's a cute one. I palavered her at the rate of a hunt, an' she ped me back in my own coin, wid dacent intherest—but no whiskey!—Now to take a rise out o' Pether. Jist sit where yees are, till I come back."

He then left them enjoying the intended "spree," and went back to Ellish.

"Well I'm sure, Ellish, if any one had tuck their

book oath that you'd refuse my father's son sich a thrifle, I wouldn't believe them. It's not wid Pether's knowledge you do it, I'll be bound. But bad as you thrated us, sure we must see how the poor fellow is, at any rate."

As he spoke, and before Ellish had time to prevent him, he pressed into the room where Peter lay.

"Why, tare alive, Pether, is it in bed you are, at this hour o' the day?"

"Eh? Who's that—who's that? oh!"

"Why thin, the sarra lie undher you, is that the way wid you?"

"Oh!—oh! Eh? Is that Condy?"

"All that's to the fore of him. What's asthray wid you, man alive?"

"Throth, Condy, I don't know rightly. I went out, wantin' my coat, about a week ago, an' got cowld in the small o' the back: I've a pain in it ever since. Be sittin'."

"Is your *heart* safe? You have no smotherin' or any thing upon *it?*

"Why thin, thank goodness, no; it's all about my back an' my hinches."

"Divil a thing it is but a complaint they call an *alloverness* ails you, you shkaimer o' the world wide. 'Tis the oil o' the hazel, or a rubbin' down wid an oak towel you want. Get up, I say, or, by this an' by that, I'll flail you widin an inch o' your life."

"Is it beside yourself you are, Condy?"

"No, no, faix; I've found you out: Ellish is afther tellin' me that it was a smotherin' on the heart; but it's a pain in the small o' the back wid *yourself.* Oh,

you born desaver! Get up, I say agin, afore I take the stick to you!"

"Why thin all sorts o' fortune to you, Condy—ha, ha, ha!—but you're the sarra's pet, for there's no escapin' you. What was that I hard atween you an' Ellish?" said Peter, getting up.

"The sarra matther to you. If you behave yourself, we may let you into the wrong side o' the sacret afore you die. Go an' get us a pint o' what you know," replied Condy, as he and Peter entered the kitchen.

"Ellish," said Peter, "I suppose we must give it to thim. Give it—give it, avourneen. Now, Condy, whin 'ill you pay me for this?"

"Never fret yourself about that; you'll be ped. Honour *bright*, as the black said whin he stole the boots."

"Now, Pether," said the wife, "sure it's no use axin' me to give it, afther the promise I made last night. Give it yourself; for me, I'll have no hand in sich things, good or bad. I hope we'll soon get out of it altogether, for myself's sick an' sore of it, dear knows!"

Peter accordingly furnished them with the liquor, and got a promise that Condy would certainly pay him at Mass on the following Sunday, which was only three days distant. The fun of the boys was exuberant at Condy's success: they drank, and laughed, and sang, until pint after pint followed in rapid succession.

Every additional inroad upon the keg brought a fresh groan from Ellish; and even Peter himself be-

gan to look blank as their potations deepened. When the night was far advanced they departed, after having first overwhelmed Ellish with professions of the warmest friendship, promising that in future she exclusively should reap whatever benefit was to be derived from their patronage.

In the mean time Condy forgot to perform his promise. The next Sunday passed, but Peter was not paid, nor was his clever debtor seen at Mass, or in the vicinity of the shebeen-house, for many a month afterwards—an instance of ingratitude which mortified his creditor extremely. The latter, who felt that it was a *take in*, resolved to cut short all hopes of obtaining credit from them in future. In about a week after the foregoing hoax, he got up a board, presenting a more vigorous refusal of *score* than the former. His friends, who were more in number than he could possibly have imagined, on this occasion, were altogether wiped out of the exception. The notice ran to the following effect:—

"Notice to the Public, *and to Pether Connell's friends in particlar*—Divil resave the morsel of credit will be got or given in this house, while there is stick or stone of it together, barrin them that axes it has the *ready money*.

"Pether X Connell, his mark.
"Ellish X Connell, her mark."

This regulation, considering every thing, was a very proper one. It occasioned much mirth among Peter's customers; but Peter cared little about that, provided he made the money.

The progress of his prosperity, dating it from so small a beginning, was certainly slow. He owed it

principally to the careful habits of Ellish, and his own sobriety. He was prudent enough to avoid placing any sign in his window, by which his house could be known as *a shebeen;* for he was not ignorant, that there is no class of men more learned in this species of hieroglyphics than excisemen. At all events, he was prepared for them, had they come to examine his premises. Nothing that could bring him within the law was ever kept visible. The cask that contained the poteen was seldom a week in the same place of concealment, which was mostly, as we have said, under ground. The tobacco was weighed and subdivided into small quantities, which, in addition to what he carried in his pocket, were distributed in various crevices and crannies of the house; sometimes under the thatch, sometimes under a dish on the dresser, but generally in a damp place.

When they had been about two or three years thus employed, Peter, at the solicitation of the wife, took a small farm.

"You're stout an' able," said she; "an' as I can manage the house widout you, wouldn't it be a good plan to take a bit o' ground—nine or ten acres, suppose—an' thry your hand at it? Sure you wor wanst the greatest man in the parish about a farm. Surely that 'ud be dacenter nor to be *slungein'* about, invintin' truth and lies for other people, whin they're at their work, to make thim laugh, an' you doin' nothin' but standin' over thim, wid your hands down to the bottom o' your pockets? Do, Pether, thry it, avick, an' you'll see it 'ill prosper wid us, plase God."

"Faix I'm ladin' an asier life, Ellish."

"But are you ladin' a dacenter or a more becominer life?"

"Why I think, widout doubt, that it's more becominer to walk about like a gintleman, nor to be workin' like a slave."

"Gintleman! Musha, is it to the fair you're bringin' yourself? Why, you great big bosthoon, isn't it both a sin an' a shame to see you sailin' about among the neighbours, like a shtray turkey, widout a hand's turn to do? But, any way, take my advice, a villish,—will you, aroon?—an' faix you'll see how rich we'll get, wid a blessin'?"

"Ellish, you're a deludher!"

"Well, an' what suppose? To be sure I am. Usen't you be followin' me, like a calf afther the finger?—ha, ha, ha!—Will you do my biddin', Pether darlin'?"

Peter gave her a shrewd, significant wink, in contradiction to what he considered the degrading comparison she had just made.

"Ellish you're beside the mark, you beauty; always put the saddle on the right horse, woman alive! Didn't you often an' often swear to me, upon two green ribbons acrass one another, that you liked a red head best, an' that the redder it was, you liked it the betther."

"An' it was thruth, too; an' sure, by the same a token, where could I get one half so red as your own? Faix, I knew what I was about! I wouldn't give you yet for e'er a young man in the parish, if I was a widow to-morrow. Will you take the land?"

"So thin, afther all, if the head hadn't been

an me, I wouldn't be a favourite wid you?—ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out wid you, an' spake sinse. Throth if you don't say aither ay or no, I'll give myself no more bother about it. There we are now wid some guineas together, an'——Faix, Pether, you're vexin' me!"

"Do you want an answer?"

"Why, if it's plasin' to *your honour*, I'd have no objection."

"Well, will you have my new big coat made agin *Shraft*?"*

"Ay will I, in case you do what I say; but if you don't, the sarra stitch of it 'll go to your back this twelvemonth, maybe, if you vex me. Now!"

"Well, I'll tell you what: my mind's made up—I *will* take the land; an' I'll show the neighbours what Pether Connell can do yit."

"Augh! augh! mavourneen, that you wor! Throth I'll fry a bit o' the bacon for our dinner to-day, on the head o' that, although I didn't intind to touch it till Sunday. Ay, faix, an' a pair o' stockins, too, along wid the coat; an' somethin' else, that you didn't hear of yit!"

Ellish, in fact, was a perfect mistress of the science of wheedling; but as it appears instinctive in the sex, this is not to be wondered at. Peter himself was easy, or rather indolent, till properly excited by the influence of adequate motives; but no sooner were the energies that slumbered in him called into activity, than he displayed a firmness of purpose, and a perseverance in action, that amply repaid his exertions.

* Shrovetide.

The first thing he did, after taking his little farm, was to prepare for its proper cultivation, and to stock it. His funds were not, however, sufficient for this at the time. A horse was to be bought, but the last guinea they could spare had been already expended, and this purchase was, therefore, out of the question. The usages of the small farmers, however, enabled him to remedy this inconvenience. Peter made a bargain with a neighbour, in which he undertook to repay him by an exchange of labour, for the use of his plough and horses in getting down his crop. He engaged to give him, for a stated period in the slack season, so many days' mowing as would cover the expenses of ploughing and harrowing his land. There was, however, a considerable portion of his holding potato-ground: this Peter himself dug with his spade, breaking it as he went along into fine mould. He then sowed the seed—got a hatchet, and selecting the best thorn-bush he could find, cut it down—tied a rope to the trunk, seized the rope, and in this manner harrowed his potato-ground. Thus did he proceed, struggling to overcome difficulties by skill, and substituting for the more efficient modes of husbandry, such rude artificial resources as his want of capital compelled him to adopt.

In the mean time, Ellish, seeing Peter acquitting himself in his undertaking with such credit, determined not to be outdone in her own department. She accordingly conceived the design of extending her business, and widening the sphere of her exertions. This intention, however, she kept secret from Peter, until by putting penny to penny, and shilling to shil-

ling, she was able to purchase a load of crockery. Here was a new source of profit opened exclusively by her own address. Peter was astonished when he saw the car unloaded, and the crockery piled in proud array by Ellish's own hands.

"I knew," said she, "I'd take a start out o' you. Faix, Pether, you'll see how I'll do, never fear, wid the help o' Heaven! I'll be off to the market in the mornin', plase God, where I'll sell rings round me o' them crocks an' pitchers. An' now, Pether, the sarra one o' me would do this, good or bad, only bekase you're managin' the farm so cleverly. Tady Gormley's goin' to bring home his meal from the mill, and has promised to lave these in the market for me, an' never fear but I'll get some o' the neighbours to bring them home, so that there's car-hire saved. Faix, Pether, there's nothin' like givin' the people sweet words, any way; sure they come chape."

"Faith, an' I'll back you for the sweet words agin any woman in the three kingdoms, Ellish, you darlin'. But don't you know the proverb, 'sweet words buther no parsnips.'"

"In throth the same proverb's a lyin' one, and ever was; but it's not parsnips I'll butther wid 'em, you gommoch."

"Sowl, you butthered me wid 'em long enough, you deludher—devil a lie in it; but thin, as you say, sure enough, I was no parsnip—not so soft as that aither, you phanix!"

"No? Thin I sildom seen your beautiful head widout thinkin' of a carrot, an' it's well known they're related—ha, ha, ha!—Behave, Pether—behave, I say

—Pether, Pether—ha, ha, ha!—let me alone! Katty Hacket, take him away from me—ha, ha, ha!"

"Will ever you, you shaver wid the tongue that you are? Will ever you, I say? Will ever you make delusion to my head agin—eh?"

"Oh, never, never—but let me go, an' me so full o' tickles! Oh, Pether, avourneen, don't, you'll hurt me, an me the way I'm in—quit, avillish!"

"Bedad, if you don't let my head alone, I'll—will ever you?"

"Never, never. There now—ha, ha, ha!—oh, but I'm as wake as wather wid what I laughed. Well now, Pether, didn't I manage bravely—didn't I?"

"Wait till we see the profits first, Ellish—crockery's very tindher goods."

"Ay!—jist wait, an' I'll engage, I'll turn the penny. The family's risin' wid us"—

"Very thrue," replied Peter, giving a sly wink at the wife—"no doubt of it."

"—Risin' wid us—I tell you to have sinse, Pether;—an' it's our duty to have something for the crathurs when they grow up."

"Well, that's thruth—sure I'm not sayin' against it."

"I know that; but what I say is, if we hould an we may make money. Every thing, for so far, has thruv wid us, God be praised for it. There's another thing in my mind, that I'll be tellin' you some o' these days."

"I believe, Ellish, you dhrame about makin' money."

"Well, an' I might do worse; when I'm dhramin'

about it, I'm doin' no sin to any one. But, listen, you must keep the house to-morrow while I'm at the market. Won't you, Pether?"

"An' who's to open the dhrain in the bottom below?"

"That can be done the day afther. Won't you, abouchal?"

"Ellish, you're a deludher, I tell you. Sweet words;—sowl, you'd smooth a furze bush wid sweet words. How-an'-ever, I *will* keep the house to-morrow, till we see the great things you'll do wid your crockery."

Ellish's success was, to say the least of it, quite equal to her expectations. She was certainly an excellent wife, full of acuteness, industry, and enterprise. Had Peter been married to a woman of a disposition resembling his own, it is probable that he would have sunk into indolence, filth, and poverty. These miseries might have soured their tempers, and driven them into all the low excesses and crimes attendant upon pauperism. Ellish, however, had sufficient spirit to act upon Peter's natural indolence, so as to excite it to the proper pitch. Her mode of operation was judiciously suited to his temper. Playfulness and kindness were the instruments by which she managed him. She knew that violence, or the assumption of authority, would cause a man who, like him, was stern when provoked, to re-act, and meet her with an assertion of his rights and authority not to be trifled with. This she consequently avoided, not entirely from any train of reasoning on the subject; but from that intuitive penetration which

taught her to know that the plan she had resorted to was best calculated to make him subservient to her own purposes without causing him to feel that he was governed.

Indeed, every day brought out her natural cleverness more clearly. Her intercourse with the world afforded her that facility of understanding the tempers and dispositions of others, which can never be acquired when it has not been bestowed as a natural gift. In her hands it was a valuable one. By degrees her house improved in its appearance, both inside and outside. From crockery she proceeded to herrings, then to salt, in each of which she dealt with surprising success. There was, too, such an air of bustle, activity, and good-humour about her that people loved to deal with her. Her appearance was striking, if not grotesque. She was tall and strong, walked rapidly, and when engaged in fair or market disposing of her coarse merchandise, was dressed in a short red petticoat, blue stockings, strong brogues, wore a blue cloak, with the hood turned up over her head, on the top of which was a man's hat fastened by a ribbon under her chin. As she thus stirred about, with a kind word and a joke for every one, her healthy cheek in full bloom, and her blue-grey eye beaming with an expression of fun and good-nature, it would be difficult to conceive a character more adapted for intercourse with a laughter-loving people. In fact, she soon became a favourite, and this not the less that she was as ready to meet her rivals in business with a blow as with a joke. Peter witnessed her success with unfeigned pleasure; and although

every feasible speculation was proposed by her, yet he never felt that he was a mere nonentity when compared to his wife. 'Tis true, he was perfectly capable of executing her agricultural plans when she proposed them, but his own capacity for making a lucky hit was very limited. Of the two she was certainly the better farmer; and scarcely an improvement took place in his little holding, which might not be traced to Ellish.

In the course of a couple of years she bought him a horse, and Peter was enabled to join with a neighbour who had another. Each had a plough and tackle, so that here was a little team made up, the half of which belonged to Peter. By this means they ploughed we k about, until their crops were got down. Peter finding his farm doing well, began to feel a kind of rivalship with his wife—that is to say, she first suggested the principle, and afterwards contrived to make him imagine that it was originally his own.

"The sarra one o' you, Pether," she exclaimed to him one day, "but's batin' me out an' out. Why, you're the very dickens at the farmin', so you are. Faix, I suppose, if you go an this way much longer, that you'll be thinkin' of another farm, in regard that we have some guineas together. Pether, did you ever think of it, abouchal?"

"To be sure I did, you beauty; an amn't I in fifty notions to take Harry Neal's land, that jist lies along side of our own."

"Faix, an' you're right, maybe; but if it's sthrivin' agin me you are, you may give it over: I tell you,

I'll have more money made afore this time twelvemonth than you will."

"Arrah, is it jokin' you are? More money? Would you advise me to take Harry's land? Tell me *that* first, you phanix, an' thin I'm your man!"

"Faix, take your own coorse, avourneen. If you get a lase of it at a fair rint, I'll buy another horse, any how. Isn't that doin' the thing dacent?"

"More power to you, Ellish! I'll hould you a crown, I pay you the price o' the horse afore this time twelvemonth."

"Done! The sarra be off me but done!—an' here's Barny Dillon an' Katty Hacket to bear witness."

"Sure enough we will," said Barny, the servant.

"I'll back the misthress any money," replied the maid.

"Two to one on the masther," said the man. "Whoo! our side o' the house for ever! Come, Pether, hould up your head, there's money bid for you!"

"Ellish, I'll fight for you, ancle deep," said Katty —"depind your life an me."

"In the name o' goodness, thin, it's a bargain," said Ellish; "an' at the end o' the year, if we're spared, we'll see what we'll see. We'll have among ourselves a little sup o' tay, plase Goodness, an' we'll be comfortable. Now, Barny, go an' draw home thim phaties from the pits while the day's fine; and, Katty, a colleen, bring in some wather, till we get the pig killed and scalded—it'll hardly have time to be good bacon for the big markets at Christmas. I

don't wish," she continued, "to keep it back from them that we have a thrifle o' money. One always does betther when it's known that they're not strugglin'. There's Nelly Cummins, an' her customers is lavin' her, an' dalin' wid me, bekase she's goin' down in business. Ay, an', Pether, a hagur, it's the way o' the world!"

"Well but, Ellish, don't you be givin' Nelly Cummins the harsh word, or lanin' too heavily upon her, the crathur, merely in regard that she *is* goin' down. Do you hear, a colleen?"

"Indeed I don't do it, Pether; but you know she has a tongue like a razor at times, and whin it gets loose she'd provoke St. Pether himself. Thin she's takin' to the dhrink, too, the poor misfortunate vagabone!"

"Well, well, that's no affair o' yours, or mine aither—only don't be risin' ructions and norrations wid her. You *threwn* a jug at her the last day you war out, an' hot the poor ould Potticary as he was passin'. You see I hard that, though you kept it close from me!—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!—why you'd split if you had seen the crathur whin he fell into Pether White's brogue-creels, wid his heels up. But what right had she to be sthrivin' to bring away my customers afore my face? Ailey Dogherty was buyin' a crock wid me, an' Nelly shouts over to her from where she sot like a prince on her stool, 'Ailey,' says she, 'here's a betther one for three fardens less, an' another farden 'ill get you a penn'orth o' salt.' An', indeed,

Ailey walks over, manely enough, an' tuck her at her word. Why, flesh an' blood couldn't bear it!"

"Indeed, an' you're raal flesh an' blood, Ellish, if that bes thrue."

"Well, but consarnin' what I mintioned awhile agone—hut! the poor mad crathur, let us have no more discoorse about her—I say, that no one ever thrives so well as when the world sees that they are gettin' an, an' prosperin'; but if there's not an appearance, how will any one know whether we are prosperin' or not, barrin' they see some sign of it about us; I mane, in a quiet rasonable way, widout show or extravagance. In the name o' Goodness, thin, let us get the house brushed up, an' the outhouses dashed. A bushel or two of lime 'ill make this as white as an egg widin, an' a very small expinse will get it plastered an' whitewashed widout. Wouldn't you like it, avourneen? Eh, Pether?"

"To be sure I'd like it. It'll give a respectful look to the house an' place."

"Ay, an' it'll bring customers, that's the main thing. People always like to come to a snug comfortable place. An', plase God, I'm thinkin' of another plan that I'll soon mintion."

"An' what may that be, you skamer? Why, Ellish, you've ever an' always some skame or other in that head o' yours. For my part, I don't know how you get at them."

"Well, no matter, acushla, do you only back me; jist show me how I ought to go an wid them, for nobody can outdo you at sich things, an' I'll

engage we'll thrive yit, always wid a blessin' an us."

"Why, to tell God's thruth, I'd bate the devil himself at plannin' out, an' bringin' a thing to a conclusion—eh, you deludher?"

"The sarra doubt of it; but takin' the other farm was the brightest thought I seen wid you yit. Will you do it, avillish?"

"To be sure. Didn't I say it? An' it'll be up wid the lark wid me. Hut, woman, you did'nt see the half o' what's in me, yet."

"I'll buy you a hat and a pair o' stockins at Christmas."

"Will you, Ellish? Then, by the book, I'll work like a horse."

"I didn't intind to tell you, but I had it laid out for you."

"Faith, you're a beauty, Ellish. What'll we call this young chap that's comin', acushla?"

"Now, Pether, none o' your capers. It's time enough when the thing happens to be thinkin' o' that, glory be to God!"

"Well, you may talk as you plase, but I'll call him Pether."

"An' how do you know but he'll be a girl, you omadhawn?"

"Murdher alive, ay, sure enough! Faith I did'nt think o' that!"

"Well, go up now an' spake to Misther Eccles about the land; maybe somebody else 'ud slip in afore us, an' that wouldn't be pleasant. Here's your brave big coat, put it an; faix, it makes a man of

you—gives you a *bodagh* look entirely: but that's little to what you'll be yet, wid a blessin'—a Half Sir, any way."

In fact, Ellish's industry had already gained a character for both herself and her husband. He got credit for the assiduity and activity to which she trained him: and both were respected for their cleverness in advancing themselves from so poor a beginning, to the humble state of independence they had then reached. The farm which Ellish was so anxious to secure was the property of the gentleman from whom they held the other. Being a man of sense and penetration, he fortunately saw—what, indeed, was generally well known—that Peter and Ellish were rising in the world, and that their elevation was the consequence of their own unceasing efforts to become independent, so that industry is in every possible point of view its own reward. So long as the farm was open to competition, the offers for it multiplied prodigiously, and rose in equal proportion. Persons not worth twenty shillings in the world, offered double the rent which the utmost stretch of ingenuity, even with suitable capital, could pay. New-married couples, with nothing but the strong imaginative hopes peculiar to their country, proposed for it in a most liberal spirit. Men who had been ejected out of their late farms for non-payment of rent, were ready to cultivate this at a rent much above that which, on better land, they were unable to pay. Others, who had been ejected from farm after farm—each of which they undertook as a mere speculation, to furnish them with present subsistence, but without

any ultimate expectation of being able to meet their engagements—came forward with the most laudable efforts. This gentleman, however, was none of those landlords who are so besotted and ignorant of their own interests, as to let their lands simply to the highest bidders, without taking into consideration their capital, moral character, and habits of industry. He resided at home, knew his tenants personally, took an interest in their successes and difficulties, and instructed them in the best modes of improving their farms.

Peter's first interview with him, was not quite satisfactory on either side. The honest man was like a ship without her rudder, when transacting business in the absence of his wife. The fact was, that on seeing the high proposals which were sent in, he became alarmed lest, as he flattered himself that the credit of the transaction should be all his own, the farm might go into the hands of another, and his character for cleverness suffer with Ellish. The landlord was somewhat astounded at the rent which a man who bore so high a name for prudence offered him. He knew it was considerably beyond what the land was worth, and he did not wish that any tenant coming upon his estate should have no other prospect than that of gradually receding into insolvency.

"I cannot give you any answer now," said he to Peter; "but if you will call in a day or two I shall let you know my final determination."

Peter, on coming home, rendered an account of his interview with the landlord to his wife, who no sooner

heard of the extravagant proposal he made, than she raised her hands and eyes, exclaiming—

"Why thin, Pether, a lanna, was it beside yourself you wor, to go for to offer a rint that no one could honestly pay! Why, man alive, it 'ud lave us widout house or home in no time, all out! Sure Pether, a cushla, where 'ud be the use of us or any one takin' land, barrin' they could make somethin' by it? Faix, if the gintleman had sinse, he wouldn't give the same farm to any body at sich a rint; an' for good rasons too—bekase they could never pay it, an himself 'ud be the sufferer in the long run."

"Dang me, but you're the long-headedest woman alive this day, Ellish. Why I never wanst wint into the rason o' the thing, at all. But you don't know the offers he got."

"Don't I? Why do you think he'd let the Mullins, or the Conlans, or the O'Donoghoes, or the Duffys, upon his land, widout a shillin' in one o' their pockets to stock it, or to begin workin' it properly wid. Hand me my cloak from the pin there, an' get your hat. Katty, avourneen, have an eye to the house till we come back; an' if Dick Murphy comes here to get tobaccy on score, tell him I can't afford it, till he pays up what he got. Come, Pether, in the name o' goodness—come, a bouchal."

Ellish, during their short journey to the landlord's, commenced, in her own way, a lecture upon agricultural economy, which, though plain and unvarnished, contained excellent and practical sense. She also pointed out to him when to speak and when to be

silent; told him what rent to offer, and in what manner he should offer it; but she did all this so dexterously and sweetly, that honest Peter thought the new and corrected views which she furnished him with, were altogether the result of his own penetration.

The landlord was at home when they arrived, and ordered them into the parlour, where he soon made his appearance.

"Well, Connell," said he, smiling, "are you come to make me a *higher* offer?"

"Why thin no, plase your honour," replied Peter looking for confidence to Ellish: "instead o' that, Sir, Ellish here"——

"Never heed me, a lanna; tell his honour what you've to say, out o' the face. Go an, acushla."

"Why, your honour, to tell the blessed thruth, the dickens a bit o' myself but had a sup in my head when I was wid your honour to-day before."

Ellish was thunderstruck at this most unexpected apology from Peter; but the fact was, that the instructions which she had given him on their way, had completely evaporated from his brain, and he felt himself thrown altogether upon his own powers of invention. Here, however, he was at home; for it was well known among all his acquaintances, that, however he might be deficient in the management of a family when compared to his wife, he was capable, notwithstanding, of exerting a certain imaginative faculty in a very high degree. Ellish felt that to contradict him on the spot must lessen both him and herself in the opinion of the landlord,

a circumstance that would have given her much pain.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Connell," said Mr. Eccles; "you bear the character of being strictly sober in your habits. You must have been early at the bottle, too, which makes your apology rather unhappy. Of all tipplers, he who drinks early is the worst and most incurable."

"Thrue for you, Sir, but this only happens me wanst a year, your honour."

"Once a year! But, by the by, you had no appearance of being tipsy, Peter."

"Tipsy! Bud-an'-age, your honour, I was never seen tipsy in all my life," said Peter.—"That's a horse of another colour, Sir, plase your honour."

The reader must at once perceive that Peter here was only recovering himself from the effects of the injurious impression which his first admission was calculated to produce against him in the mind of his landlord.

"Tipsy! No, no, Sir; but the rason of it, Sir, was this: it bein' my birthday, Sir, I merely tuck a sup in the mornin', in honour o' the day. It's altogether a lucky day to me, Sir!"

"Why, to be sure, every man's birthday may, probably, be called such—the gift of existence being, I fear, too much undervalued."

"Bedad, your honour, I don't mane that, at all."

"Then what *do* you mean, Peter?"

"Why, Sir, you see, it's not that I was *entirely* born on this day, but *partly*, Sir; I was marrid to Ellish here into the bargain,—one o' the best wives,

Sir—however, I'll say no more, as she's to the fore herself. But, death alive, Sir, sure when we put both conclusions together—myself bein' sich a worthy man, and Ellish such a tip-top wife, who could blame me for smellin' the bottle?—for divil a much more I did—about two glasses, Sir—an' so it got up into my head a little when I was wid your honour to-day before."

"But what is the amount of all this, Peter?"

"Why Sir, you see only I was as I said, Sir—not tipsy, your honour, any way, but seein' things double or so; an' that was, I suppose, what made me offer for the farm double what I intinded. Every body knows, Sir, that the 'crathur' gives the big heart to us, any how, your honour."

"But you know Peter, we entered into no terms about it. I, therefore, have neither power nor inclination to hold you to the offer you made."

"Faith, Sir, you're not the gintleman to do a shabby turn, nor never was, nor one o' your family. There's not in all Europe"—

Ellish, who was a point blank dealer, could endure Peter's mode of transacting business no longer. She knew that if he once got into the true spirit of applying the oil of flattery to the landlord, he would have rubbed him into a perfect froth ere he quitted him. She, therefore, took up the thread of the discourse, and finished the compliment with much more delicacy than honest Peter could have displayed.

"Thrue for you, Pether," she added; "there is not a kinder family to the poor, nor betther landlords, in the country they live in. Pether an' myself, your

honour, on layin' both our heads together, found that he offered more rint for the land nor any tenant could honestly pay. So, Sir, where's the use of keepin' back God's thruth—Pether, Sir"—

Peter here trembled from an apprehension that the wife, in accomplishing some object of her own in reference to the land, was about to undeceive the landlord, touching the lie which he had so barefacedly palmed upon that worthy gentleman for truth. In fact, his anxiety overcame his prudence, and he resolved to anticipate her.

"I'd advise you, Sir," said he, with a smile of significant good-humour, "to be a little suspicious of her, for, to tell the thruth, she draws the" here he illustrated the simile with his staff—"the long bow of an odd time; faith she does. I'd kiss the book on the head of what I tould you, Sir, plase your honour. For the sacret of it is, that I tuck the moisture afore she left her bed."

"Why, Peter, alanna," said Ellish, soothingly, "what's comin' over you, at all, an' me goin' to explain to his honour the outs and ins of our opinion about the land? Faix, man, we're not thinkin' about you, good or bad."

"I believe the drop has scarcely left your head yet, Peter," said the landlord.

"Bud-an'-age, your honour, sure we must have our joke, any how—doesn't she desarve it for takin' the words out o' my mouth?"

"Whisht, a villish; you're too cute for us all, Pether. There's no use, Sir, as I was sayin', for any one to deny that when they take a farm they do it to

make by it, or at the laste to live comfortably an it. That's the thruth, your honour, an' it's no use to keep it back from you, Sir."

"I perfectly agree with you," said the landlord. "It is with these motives that a tenant should wish to occupy land; and it is the duty of every landlord who has his own interest truly at heart, to see that his land be not let at such a rent as will preclude the possibility of comfort or independence on the part of his tenantry. He who lets his land *above* its value, merely because people are foolish enough to offer more for it than it is worth, is as great an enemy to himself as he is to the tenant."

"It's God's thruth, Sir, an' it's nothin' else but a comfort to hear sich words comin' from the lips of a gintleman that's a landlord himself."

"Ay, an' a good one, too," said Peter; "an' kind father for his honour to be what he is. Divil resave the family in all Europe"—

"Thrue for you, avourneen, an' every one knows that. We wor talkin' it over, Sir, betuxt ourselves, Pether an' me, an' he says very cutely, that, upon second thoughts, he offered more nor we could honestly pay out o' the land; so—"

"Faith, it's as thrue as Gospel, your honour. Says I, 'Ellish, you beauty' "—

"I thought," observed Mr. Eccles, "that she sometimes drew the long bow, Peter."

"Oh, murdher alive, Sir, it was only in regard of her crassin' in an' whippin' the word out o' my mouth, that I wanted to take a rise out of her. Oh,

bedad, Sir, no ; the crathur's thruth to the back-bone, an' farther if I'd say it."

" So, your honour, considherin' every thing, we're willin' to offer thirty shillins an acre for the farm. That rint, Sir, we'll be able to pay, wid the help o' God, for sure we can do nothin' widout his assistance, glory be to his name! You'll get many that'll offer you more, your honour; but if it 'ud be plasin' to you to considher what manes they have to pay it, I think, Sir, you'd see, out o' your own sinse, that it's not likely people who is gone to the bad, an' has nothin', could stand it out long."

" I wish to heaven," replied Mr. Eccles, " that every tenant in Ireland possessed your prudence and good sense. Will you permit me to ask, Mrs. Connell, what capital you and your husband can command, provided I should let you have it."

" Wid every pleasure in life, Sir, for it's but a fair question to put. An' sure, it is to God we owe it, whatever it is, plase your honour. But, Sir, if we get the land, we're able to stock it, an' to crop it well an' dacently ; an' if your honour would allow us for sartin improvements, Sir, we'd run it into snug fields, by plantin' good hedges, an' gettin' up shelther for the outlyin' cattle in the hard seasons, plase your honour, and you know the farm is very naked and bare of shelter at present."

" Sowl, will we, Sir, an' far more nor that, if we get it. I'll undhertake, Sir, to level"—

" No, Pether, we'll promise no more nor we'll do ; but any thing that his honour will be plased

to point out to us, if we get fair support, an' that it remains on the farm afther us, we'll be willin' to do it."

"Willin'!" exclaimed Peter—"faith, whether we're willin' or not, if his honour but says the word"——

"Mrs. Connell," said their landlord, "say no more. The farm is yours, and you may consider yourselves as my tenants."

"Many thanks to you, Sir, for the priference. I hope, Sir, you'll not rue what you did in givin' it to us before them that offered a higher rint. You'll find, Sir, wid the help o' the Almighty, that we'll pay you your rint rigular an' punctual."

"Why, thin, long life, an' glory, an' benediction to your honour! Faith it's only kind father for you, Sir, to be what you are. The divil resave the family in all Europe"——

"Peter, that will do," replied the landlord; "it would be rather hazardous for our family to compete with all Europe. Go home, Peter, and be guided by your wife, who has more sense in her little finger, than ever your family had either in Europe or out of it, although I mean you no offence by going *beyond* Europe."

"By all the books that never wor opened an' shut," replied Peter, with the intuitive quickness of perception peculiar to Irishmen, "an innocenter boy than Andy Connell never was sent acrass the wather. I proved as clear an *Alibi* for him, as the sun in the firmament; an' yit, bad luck to the big-wig O'Grady, he should be puttin' in his leek an me afore

the jury, jist whin I had the poor boy cleared out dacently, an' wid all honour. An' bedad, now, that we're spakin' about it, I'll tell your honour the whole conclusions of it. You see, Sir, the Agint was shot one night; an' above all nights in the year, your honour, a thief of a toothache that I had kep me"——

"Pether, come away, a bouchal: his honour knows as much about it as you do. Come, aroon; you know we must help to scald an' scrape the pig afore night, an' it's late now."

"Bedad, Sir, she's a sweet one, this."

"Be guided by her, Peter, if you're wise: she's a wife you ought to be proud of."

"Thrue for you, Sir; divil resave the word o' lie in that, any how. Come, Ellish; come, you deludher, I'm wid you."

"God bless your honour, Sir, an' we're oblaged to you for your kindness an' patience wid the likes of us."

"I say ditto, your honour. Long life an' glory to you every day your honour rises!"

Peter, on his way home, entered into a defence of his apology for offering so high a rent to the landlord; but although it possessed both ingenuity and originality, it was, we must confess, grossly defective in those principles usually inculcated by our best Ethic writers.

"Couldn't you have tould him what we agreed upon goin' up," observed Ellish; "but instead o' that, to begin an' tell the gintleman so many lies about your bein' dhrunk, an' this bein' your birth-day, an' the day we wor marrid, an',——Musha, sich quare stories to come into your head!"

"Why," said Peter, "what harm's in all that, whin he didn't *find me out?*"

"But why the sarra did you go to say that *I* was in the custom o' tellin' lies?"

"Faix, bekase I thought you wor goin' to let out all, an' I thought it best to have the first word o' you. What else?—but sure I brought myself off bravely."

"Well, well, a hudh; don't be invintin' sich things another time, or you'll bring yourself into a scrape, some way or other."

"Faix, an' *you* needn't spake Ellish; you can let out a nate bounce yourself, whin it's to sarve you. Come now, don't run away wid the story!"

"Well, if I do, it's in the way o' my business; whin I'm batin' thim down in the price o' what I'm buyin', or gettin' thim to bid up for any thing I'm sellin': besides, it's to advance ourselves in the world that I do it, a bouchal."

"Go an, go an; faix you're like the new moon, sharp at both corners: but what matther, you beauty, we've secured the farm, at any rate, an', by this an' by that, I'll show you tip-top farmin' an it."

A struggle now commenced between the husband and wife, as to which of them should, in their respective departments, advance themselves with greater rapidity in life. This friendly contest was kept up principally by the address of Ellish, who, as she knew those points in her husband's character most easily wrought upon, felt little difficulty in shaping him to her own purposes. Her great object was to acquire wealth; and it mostly happens, that when this is the ruling principle in life, there is usually to be found in

association with it, all those qualities which are best adapted to secure it. Peter, on finding that every succeeding day brought something to their gains, began to imbibe a portion of that spirit which wholly absorbed Ellish. He became worldly; but it was rather the worldliness of habit, than of principle. In the case of Ellish, it proceeded from both; her mind was apt, vigorous, and conceptive; her body active, her manners bland and insinuating, and her penetration almost intuitive. About the time of their entering upon the second farm, four children had been the fruit of their marriage—two sons and two daughters. These were now new sources of anxiety to their mother, and fresh impulses to her industry. Her ignorance, and that of her husband, of any kind of education, she had often, in the course of their business, bitter cause to regret. She now resolved that their children should be well instructed; and no time was lost in sending them to school, the moment she thought them capable of imbibing the simplest elements of instruction.

"It's hard to say," she observed to her husband, "how soon they may be useful to us. Who knows, Pether, but we may have a full shop yit, an' they may be able to make up bits of accounts for us, poor things? Throth, I'd be happy if I wanst seen it."

"Faix, Ellish," replied Peter, "if we get an as we're doin', it *is* hard to say. For my own part, if I had got the larnin' in time, I might be a bright boy to-day, no doubt of it—could spake up to the best o' thim. I never wint to school but wanst, an' I remimber I threwn the masther into a kiln-pot, an' broke

the poor crathur's arm; an' from that day to this, I never could be brought a single day to school."

Peter and Ellish now began to be pointed out as a couple worthy of imitation, by those who knew that perseverance and industry never fail of securing their own reward. Others, however,—that is to say, the lazy, the profligate, and the ignorant—had a ready solution for the secret of their success.

"Oh, my dear, she's a *lucky* woman, an' any thing she puts her hand to prospers. Sure she was born wid *a lucky caul* an her head; an', be sure, a hagur, the world will flow in upon thim. There's many a neighbour about thim works their fingers to the stumps, an' yit you see they can't get an: for Ellish, if she'd throw the sweepins of her hearth to the wind, it 'ud come back to her in money. *She was born to it, an' nothin can keep her from her luck!*"*

Such are many of the senseless theories that militate against exertion and industry in Ireland, and occasion many to shrink back from the laudable race of honest enterprise, into filth, penury, and crime. It is this idle and envious crew, who, with a natural aversion to domestic industry, become adepts in politics, and active in those illegal combinations and outrages which place the country below the poorest and most barbarous upon the earth.

In the mean time Ellish was rapidly advancing in life, while such persons were absurdly speculating upon the cause of her success. Her business was not only increased, but extended. From crockery, her-

* The doctrine of fatalism is very prevalent among the lower orders in Ireland.

rings, and salt, she advanced gradually to deal in other branches adapted to her station, and the wants of the people. She bought stockings, and retailed them every market-day. By and by a few pieces of soap might be seen in her windows: starch, blue, potash, and candles, were equally profitable. Pipes were seen stuck across each other, flanked by tape, cakes, children's books, thimbles, and bread. In fact, she was equally clever and expert in whatever she undertook. The consciousness of this, and her reputation as being "a hard honest woman," encouraged her to get a cask or two of beer, and a few rolls of tobacco. Peter, when she proposed the two last, consented only to sell them still as smuggled goods—*sub silentio*. With her usual prudence, however, she declined this.

"We have gone on that way purty far," she replied, "an' never *got a touch*,* thanks to the kindness o' the neighbours that never informed an us; but now, Pether, that we're *able*, we had betther do every thing above boord. You know the ould say, 'long runs the fox, but he's catched at last;' so let us give up in time, an' get out a little bit o' licence."

"I don't like that at all," replied Peter; "I can't warm my heart to the licence. I'll back you in any thing but that. The gauger won't come next or near us: he has thried it often, an' never made any thing of it. Dang me, but I'd like to have a bit o' fun wid the gauger, to see if my hand's still ready for practice."

"Oh, thin, Pether, how can you talk that way, asthore? Now if what I'm sayin' was left to your-

* Never suffered by the excisemen.

self wouldn't you be apt to plan it as I'm doin'?—wouldn't you, acushla? Throth, I know you're too cute an' sinsible not to do it."

"Why thin, do you know what, Ellish—although I didn't spake out, upon my faix I was thinkin' of it. Divil a word o' lie in it."

"Oh, you thief o' the world, an' never to tell it to me. Faix, Pether, you're a cunnin' shaver, an' as deep as a draw well."

"Let me alone. Why I tell you if I study an' lay myself down to it, I can conthrive any thing. Whin I was young, many a time my poor father, God be good to him! said that if there was any possibility of gettin' me to take to larnin', I'd be risin' out o' the ashes every mornin' like a phanix."

"But won't you hould to your plan about the licence?"

"Hould! To be sure I will. What was I but takin' a rise out o' you. I intinded it this good while, you phanix—faix, I did."

In this manner did Ellish dupe her own husband into increasing wealth. Their business soon became so extensive, that a larger house was absolutely necessary. To leave that, beneath whose roof she succeeded so well in all her speculations, was a point—be it of prudence or of prejudice—which Ellish could not overcome. Her maxim was, wherever you find yourself doing well, stay there. She contrived, however, to remedy this. To the old house additional apartments were, from time to time, added, into which their business soon extended. When these again became too small, others were also built; so that in the

course of about twenty years, their premises were so extensive, that the original shebeen-house constituted a very small portion of Peter's residence. Peter, during Ellish's progress within doors, had not been idle without. For every new room added to the house, he was able to hook in a fresh farm in addition to those he had already occupied. Unexpected success had fixed his heart as strongly upon the accumulation of money, and the pride of rising in the world, as it was possible for a man, to whom they were only adventitious feelings, to experience. The points of view in which he and his wife were contemplated by the little public about them were peculiar, but clearly distinct. The wife was generally esteemed for her talents and incessant application to business; but she was not so cordially liked as Peter. He, on the other hand, though less esteemed, was more beloved by all their acquaintances than Ellish. This might probably originate from the more obvious congeniality which existed between Peter's natural disposition, and the national character; for with the latter, Ellish, except good-humour, had little in common.

The usual remarks upon both were—"she would buy an' sell him"—"'twas she that made a man of him; but for all that, Pether's worth a ship-load of her, if she'd give him his own way." That is, if she would permit him to drink with the neighbours, to be idle and extravagant.

Every year, now that their capital was extending, added more perceptibly to their independence. Ellish's experience in the humbler kinds of business, trained her for a higher line; just as boys at school

rise from one form to another. She made no plunges, nor permitted Peter, who was often inclined to jump at conclusions, to make any. Her elevation was gradual and cautious; for her plans were always so seasonable and simple, that every new description of business, and every new success, seemed to arise naturally from that which went before it.

Having once taken out a licence, their house soon became a decent country spirit establishment; from soap, and candles, and tobacco, she rose into the full sweep of groceries; and from dealing in Connemara stockings and tape, she proceeded in due time to sell woollen and linen drapery. Her crockery was now metamorphosed into delf, pottery, and hardware; her gingerbread into stout loaves, for as Peter himself grew wheat largely, she seized the opportunity presented by the death of the only good baker in the neighbourhood, of opening an extensive bakery.

It may be asked, how two illiterate persons, like Peter and Ellish, could conduct business in which so much calculation was necessary, without suffering severely by their liability to make mistakes. To this we reply—first, that we should have liked to see any person attempting to pass a bad note or a light guinea upon Ellish after nine or ten years' experience; we should like to have seen a smug clerk taking his pen from behind his ear, and after making his calculation, on inquiring from Ellish if she had reckoned up the amount, compelled to ascertain the error which she pointed out to him. The most remarkable point in her whole character, was the rapid accuracy she dis-

played in mental calculation, and her uncommon sagacity in detecting bad money.

There is, however, a still more satisfactory explanation of this circumstance to be given. She had not neglected the education of her children. The eldest was now an intelligent boy, and a smart accountant, who, thanks to his master, had been taught to keep their books by Double Entry. The second was little inferior to him as a clerk, though as a general dealer he was far his superior. The eldest had been principally behind the counter; whilst the younger in accompanying his mother in all her transactions and bargain-making, had in a great measure imbibed her address and tact.

It is certainly a pleasing, and, we think, an interesting thing, to contemplate the enterprise of an humble, but active, shrewd woman, enabling her to rise, step by step, from the lowest state of poverty to a small sense of independence; from this, by calling fresh powers into action, taking wider views, and following them up by increased efforts, until her shebeen becomes a small country public-house; until her roll of tobacco, and her few pounds of soap and starch, are lost in the well-filled drawers of a grocery shop; and her grey Connemara stockings transformed, by the golden wand of industry, into a country cloth warehouse. To see Peter—from the time when he first harrowed part of his farm with a thorn-bush, and ploughed it by joining his horse to that of a neighbour—adding farm to farm, horse to horse, and cart to cart, until we find him a wealthy and extensive agriculturist.

The progress of Peter and Ellish was in another point of view a good study for him who wishes to look into human nature, whilst adapting itself to the circumstances through which it passes. When this couple began life, their friends and acquaintances were as poor as themselves; as they advanced from one gradation to another, and rose up from a lower to a higher state, their former friends, who remained in their original poverty, found themselves left behind in cordiality and intimacy, as well as in circumstances; whilst the subjects of our sketch continued to make new friendships of a more respectable stamp, to fill up, as it were, the places held in their good will by their humble, but neglected, intimates. Let not our readers, however, condemn them for this. It was the act of society, and not of Peter and Ellish. On their parts, it was involuntary; their circumstances raised them, and they were compelled, of course, to rise with their circumstances. They were passing through the journey of life, as it were, and those with whom they set out, not having been able to keep up with them, soon lost their companionship, which was given to those with whom they travelled for the time being. Society is always ready to reward the enterprising and industrious by its just honours, whether they are sought or not; it is so disposed, that every man falls or rises into his proper place in it, and that by the wisdom and harmony of its structure. The rake, who dissipates by profligacy and extravagance that which might have secured him an honourable place in life, is eventually brought to the work-house;

whilst the active citizen, who realizes an honest independence, is viewed with honour and esteem.

Peter and Ellish were now people of consequence in the parish; the former had ceased to do any thing more than superintend the cultivation of his farms; the latter still took an active part in her own business, or rather in the various departments of business which she carried on. Peter might be seen the first man abroad in the morning proceeding to some of his farms mounted upon a good horse, comfortably dressed in top boots, stout corduroy breeches, buff cashmere waistcoat, and blue broad-cloth coat, to which in winter was added, a strong frieze great-coat, with a drab velvet collar, and a glazed hat. Ellish was also respectably dressed, but still considerably under her circumstances. Her mode of travelling to fairs or markets was either upon a common car, covered with a feather bed and quilt, or behind Peter upon a pillion. This last method flattered Peter's vanity very much; no man could ride on these occasions with a statelier air. He kept himself as erect and stiff as a poker, and brandished the thong of his loaded whip, with the pride of a gentleman farmer.

'Tis true, he did not always hear the sarcastic remarks which were passed upon him by those who witnessed his good-natured vanity:

"There he goes," some labouring man on the wayside would exclaim, "a purse-proud *bodagh* upon our hands. Why, thin, does he forget that we remimber when he kept the shebeen-house, an' sould his smuggled tobaccy in *gits* out of his pocket, for fraid o' the

gauger! Sowl, he'd show a blue nose, any way, only for the wife—'Twas she made a man of him."

"Faith, an' I, for one, won't hear Pether Connell run down," his companion would reply; "he's a good-hearted, honest man, an' oblagin' enough; an' for that matter so is the wife, a hard honest woman, that made what they have, an' brought herself an' her husband from nothin' to somethin'."

"Thrue for you, Tim; in throth they *do* desarve credit. Still, you see, here's you an' me, an we've both been slavin' ourselves as much as they were, an' yet you see how we are! However, *it's their luck*, an' there's no use in begrudgin' it to them."

When their children were full grown, the mother did not, as might have been supposed, prevent them from making a respectable appearance. With excellent judgment, she tempered their dress, circumstances, and prospects so well together, that the family presented an admirable display of economy, and a decent sense of independence. From the moment they were able to furnish solid proofs of their ability to give a comfortable dinner occasionally, the priest of the parish began to notice them; and this new intimacy, warmed by the honour conferred on one side, and by the good dinners on the other, ripened into a strong friendship. For many a long year, neither Peter nor Ellish, God forgive them, ever troubled themselves about going to their duty. They soon became, however, persons of too much importance to be damned without an effort made for their salvation. The worthy gentleman accordingly addressed them on the subject, and as the matter was

one of perfect indifference to both, they had not the slightest hesitation to go to confession—in compliment to the priest. We do not blame the priest for this; God forbid that we should quarrel with a man for eating a good dinner. If we ourselves were a priest, it is very probable—nay, from the zest with which we approach a good dinner, it is quite certain, that we would have cultivated honest Peter's acquaintance, and drawn him out to the practice of that most social of virtues—hospitality. The salvation of such a man's soul was worth looking after; and, indeed, we find a much warmer interest felt, in all churches, for those who are able to give good dinners, than for those poor miserable sinners who can scarcely get even a bad one.

But besides this, there was another reason for the Rev. Mr. Mulcahy's anxiety to cultivate a friendship with Peter and his wife—which reason consisted in a very laudable determination to bring about a match between his own niece, Miss Granua Mulcahy and Peter's eldest son, Dan. This speculation he had not yet broached to the family, except by broken hints, and jocular allusions to the very flattering proposals that had been made by many substantial young men for Miss Granua.

In the mean time the wealth of the Connells had accumulated to thousands; their business in the linen and woollen drapery line was incredible. There was scarcely a gentleman within many miles of them, who did not find it his interest to give them his custom. In the hardware, flour, and baking concerns, they were equally extensive. The report of their

wealth had gone far and near, exaggerated, however, as every thing of the kind is certain to be; but still there were ample grounds for estimating it at a very high amount.

Their stores were large, and well filled with many a valuable bale; their cellars well stocked with every description of spirits; and their shop, though not large in proportion to their transactions, was well filled, neat, and tastefully fitted up. There was no show, however—no empty glare to catch the eye; on the contrary, the whole concern was marked by an air of solid, warm comfort, that was much more indicative of wealth and independence, than tawdry embellishment would have been.

"Avourneen," said Ellish, "the way to deck out your shop is to keep the best of goods. Wanst the people knows that they'll get betther money-worth here than they'll get any where else, they'll come here, whether the shop looks well or ill. Not sayin' but every shop ought to be clane an' dacent, for there's rason in all things."

This, indeed, was another secret of their success. Every article in their shop was of the best description, having been selected by Ellish's own eye and hand in the metropolis, or imported directly from the place of its manufacture. Her periodical visits to Dublin gave her great satisfaction; for it appears that those with whom she dealt, having had sufficient discrimination to appreciate her talents and integrity treated her with marked respect.

Peter's farm-yard bore much greater evidence of his wealth, than did Ellish's shop. It was certainly

surprising to reflect, that by the capacity of two illiterate persons, who began the world with nothing, all the best and latest improvements in farming were either adopted or anticipated. The farm-yard was upon a great scale; for Peter cultivated no less than four hundred acres of land—to such lengths had his enterprise carried him. Threshing machines, large barns, corn-kilns, large stacks, extensive stables, and immense cow-houses, together with the incessant din of active employment perpetually going on—all gave a very high opinion of their great property, and certainly reflected honour upon those whose exertions had created such a scene about them. One would naturally suppose, when the family of the Connells had arrived to such unexpected riches, and found it necessary to conduct a system whose machinery was so complicated and extensive, that Ellish would have fallen back to the simple details of business, from a deficiency of that comprehensive intelligence which is requisite to conduct the higher order of mercantile transactions; especially as her sons were admirably qualified by practice, example, and education, to ease her of a task, which would appear one of too much difficulty for an unlettered farmer's wife. Such a supposition would be injurious to this excellent woman. So far from this being the case, she was still the moving spirit, the chief conductor of the establishment. Whenever any difficulty arose that required an effort of ingenuity and sagacity, she was able in the homeliest words to disentangle it so happily, that those who heard her wondered that it should at all have appeared to them as a difficulty. She was every

where. In Peter's farm-yard her advice was as excellent and as useful as in her own shop. On his farms she was the better agriculturist, and she frequently set him right in his plans and speculations for the ensuing year.

She herself was not ignorant of her skill. Many a time has she surveyed the scene about her with an eye in which something like conscious pride might be seen to kindle. On those occasions she usually shook her head, and exclaimed, either in soliloquy, or by way of dialogue, to some person near her:

"Well, avourneen, all's very right, an' goin' an bravely; but I only hope that when *I'm gone* I won't be missed!"

"Missed," Peter would reply, if he happened to hear her; "oh, upon my credit"—he was a man of too much consequence to swear "by this an' by that" now—"upon my credit, Ellish, if you die soon, you'll see the ginteel wife I'll have in your place."

"Whisht, avourneen! Although you're but jokin', I don't like to hear it, a villish! No, indeed; we wor too long together, Pether, and lived too happily wid one another, for you to have the heart to think of sich a thing!"

"No, in throth, Ellish, I would be long sarry to do it. It's displasin' to you, achree, an' I won't say it. God spare you to us! It was you put the bone in us, an' that's what all the country says, big an' little, young an' ould; an' God he knows it's thruth, and nothin' else."

"Indeed, no, thin, Pether, it's not altogether thruth; you desarve your full share of it. You backed me

well, acushla, in every thing, an' if you had been a dhrinkin', idle, rollikin' vagabone, what 'ud signify all that me, or the likes o' me, could do."

"Faith, an' it was you made me what I am, Ellish; you tuck the soft side o' me, you beauty; an' it's well you did, for by this—hem, upon my reputation, if you had gone to cross purposes wid me, you'd find yourself in the wrong box. An', you phanix o' beauty, you managed the childhre, the crathurs, the same way—an' a good way it is, in throth."

"Pether, wor you ever thinkin' o' Father Mulcahy's *sweetness* to us of late?"

"No, thin, the sorra one o' me thought of it. Why, Ellish?"

"Did'nt you obsarve that for the last three or four months he's full of attintions to us? Every Sunday he brings *you* up, an' *me*, *if I'd go*, to the althar, an' keeps you there by way of showin' you respect. Pether, it's not you, but your money he respects; an' I think there ought to be no respect o' persons in the chapel, any how. You're not a bit nearer God by bein' near the althar; for how do we know but the poorest crathur there is nearer to heaven than we are!"

"Faith, sure enough, Ellish; but what deep skame are you penethratin' now, you desaver?"

'I'd lay my life, you'll have a proposial o' marriage from Father Mulcahy, atween our Dan an' Miss Granua. For many a day he's hintin' to us, from time to time, about the great offers she had; now what's the rason, if *she* had these great offers, that *he* didn't take them?"

"Bedad, Ellish, you're the greatest head-piece in all Europe. Murdher alive, woman, what a fine counsellor you'd make. An' suppose he did offer, Ellish, what 'ud you be sayin' to him?"

"Why, that 'ud depind entirely upon what he's able to give her—they say he has money. It 'ud depind, too, upon whether Dan has any likin' for her, or not."

"He's often wid her, I know; an' I needn't tell you, Ellish, that afore we wor spliced together, I was often wid somebody that I won't mintion. At all evints, he has made Dan put the big O afore the Connell, so that he has him now full namesake to the Counsellor; an', faith, *that itself 'ud get him a wife.*"

"Well, the best way is to say nothin', an' to hear nothin', till his Reverence spakes out, an' thin we'll see what can be done."

Ellish's sagacity had not misled her. In a few months afterwards Father Mulcahy was asked by young Dan Connell to dine; and as he and honest Ellish were sitting together, in the course of the evening, the priest broached the topic as follows:—

"Mrs. Connell, I think this whiskey is better than my four year old, that I bought at the Protestant Bishop of ——'s auction, although Dan says mine's better. Between ourselves, that Dan is a clever, talented young fellow; and if he happens upon a steady, sensible wife, there is no doubt but he will die a respectable man. But, by the by, Mrs. Connell, you've never tried *my* whiskey; and, upon my credit, you must soon, for I know your opinion would decide the question."

"Is it worth while to decide it, your Reverence? I suppose the thruth is, Sir, that both is good enough for any one; an' I think that's as much as we want."

Thus far she went, but never alluded to Dan, judiciously throwing the *onus* of introducing *that* subject upon the priest.

"Dan says mine's better," observed Father Mulcahy; "and I would certainly give a great deal for his opinion upon that or any other subject, except theology."

"You ought," replied Ellish, "to be a betther judge of whiskey nor either Dan nor me; an' I'll tell you why—you dhrink it in more places, and can make comparishment one wid another; but Dan an' me is confined mostly to our own, an' of that same we take very little, an' the less the betther for people in business, or indeed for any body."

"Very true, Mrs. Connell! But for all that, I won't give up Dan's judgment in any thing within his own line of business, still excepting theology, for which he hasn't the learning."

"He's a good son, witdout *tay*ology—as good as ever broke the world's bread," said Peter, "glory be to God! Although, for that matther, he ought to be as well acquainted wid *tay*-ology as your Reverence, in regard that he *sells* more of it nor you do."

"A good son, they say, Mrs. Connell, will make a good husband. I wonder you don't think of settling him in life. It's full time."

"Father, avourneen, we must lave that wid himself. I needn't be tellin' you, that it 'ud be hard to

find a girl able to bring what any girl that 'ud expect Dan *ought* to bring."

This was a staggerer to the priest, who recruited his ingenuity by drinking Peter's health, and Ellish's.

"Have you *nobody* in your eye for him, Mrs. Connell?"

"Faith, I'll engage she has," replied Peter, with a ludicrous grin—"I'll venture for to say she has *that*."

"Very right, Mrs. Connell; it's all fair. Might one ask who she is; for, to tell you the truth, Dan is a favourite of mine, and I must make it a point to see him well settled."

"Why, your Reverence," replied Peter again, "jist the one you mintioned."

"Who? I? Why I mentioned *nobody*."

"An' *that's* the very one she has in her eye for him, plase your Reverence—ha, ha, ha! What's the world widout a joke, Docthor, beggin' your pardon for makin' so free wid you?"

"Peter, you're still a wag," replied the priest; "but, seriously, Mrs. Connell, have you selected any female *of respectable connexions*, as a likely person to be a wife for Dan?"

"Indeed no, your Reverence; I have not. Where could I pitch upon a girl—barrin' a Protestant, an' that 'ud never do—who has a fortune to meet what Dan's to get?"

The priest moved his chair a little, and drank their healths a second time.

"But you know, Mrs. Connell, that Dan needn't care so much about fortune, if he got a girl *of respect-*

able connexions. He has an independence himself."

"Thrue for you, father; but what right would any girl have to expect to be supported by the hard armin' of me an' my husband, widout bringin' somethin' forrid herself? You know, Sir, that the fortune always goes wid the wife; but am I to fortune off my son to a girl that has nothin'? If my son, plase your Reverence, hadn't a coat to his back, or a guinea in his pocket—as, God be praised, he has both—but, supposin' he hadn't, what right would he have to expect a girl wid a handsome fortune to marry him? There's Paddy Neil, your sarvant-boy; now, if Paddy, who's an honest man's son, axed your neice, wouldn't you be apt to lose your timper?"

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Connell, I think your fire's rather hot—allow me to draw back a little. Mrs. Connell, your health again!—Mr. C. your fire side!"

"Thank you, Docthor; but faith I think you ought hardly to dhrink the same fire-side, bekase it appears to be rather *hot* for your Reverence, at the present time—ha, ha, ha! Jokin' still, Docthor, we must be. Well, what harm! I wish we may never do worse!"

"And what fortune would you expect with a girl of *genteel connexions*—a girl that's accomplished, we'll say in music, plain work, and Irish, vernacularly? —hem! What fortune would you be expecting with such a girl?"

"Why, Docthor, a hagur, the only music I'd wish for my son's wife is a good timper; an' that's what

their music-masthers can't tache thim. The plain work, although I don't know what you mane by it, sounds well enough; an' as to *Idish*, *whick-whack-ularly*, if you mane our own ould tongue, he may get thousands that can spake it *whackinly*, an' nothin else."

"You're a wealthy woman, certainly, Mrs. Connell, and what's more, I'm not at all surprised at it. Your health, once more, and long life to you! Suppose, however, that Dan got a fitting wife, what would you expect as a proper portion? I have a reason for asking."

"Dan, plase your Reverence, will get four thousand to begin the world wid; an', as he's to expect none but a Catholic, I suppose if he gets the fourth part of that, it's as much as he ought to look for."

"A thousand pounds!—hut tut! The woman's beside herself. Why look about you, and try where you can find a Catholic girl with a thousand pounds fortune, except in a gentleman's family, where Dan could never think of going."

"That's thrue, any how, your Reverence," observed Peter.—"A thousand pounds! Ellish, you needn't look for it. Where is it to be had out of a gintleman's family, as his Reverence says, thrue enough."

"An' now, Docthor," said Ellish, "what 'ud *you* think a girl ought to bring a young man like Dan, that's to have four thousand pounds?"

"I don't think any Catholic girl of his own rank in the county, could get more than a couple of hundred."

"That's one shillin' to every pound he has," replied Ellish, almost instantaneously. "But, Father, you may as well spake out at wanst," she continued, for she was too quick and direct in all her dealings to be annoyed by circumlocution; "you're desairous of a match between Dan an' Miss Granua?"

"Exactly," said the priest; "and what is more, I believe they are fond of each other. I know Dan is attached to her, for he told me so. But, now that we have mentioned her, I say that there is not a more accomplished girl of her persuasion in the parish we sit in. She can play on the bag-pipes better than any other piper in the province, for I taught her myself; and I tell you that in a respectable man's wife a knowledge of music is a desirable thing. It's hard to tell, Mrs. Connell, how they may rise in the world, and get into fashionable company, so that accomplishments, you persave, are good. She can make a shirt and wash it, and she can write Irish. As for dancing, I only wish you'd see her at a hornpipe. All these things put together, along with her genteel connexions, and the prospect of what I may be able to lave her—I say your son may do worse."

"It's not what you'd lave her, Sir, but what you'd give her in the first place, that I'd like to hear. Spake up, your Reverence, an' let us know how far you *will* go."

"I'm afeard, Sir," said Peter, "if it goes to a clane bargain atween yees, that Ellish will make you bid up for Dan. Be sharp, Sir, or you'll have no chance; faix, you won't."

"But, Mrs. Connell," replied the priest, "before

I spake up, consider her accomplishments. I'll undertake to say, that the best bred girl in Dublin cannot perform music in such style, or on such an instrument as the one she uses. Let us contemplate Dan and her after marriage, in an elegant house, and full business, the dinner over, and they gone up to the drawing-room. Think how agreeable and graceful it would be for Mrs. Daniel O'Connell to repair to the sofa, among a few respectable friends, and, taking up her bag-pipes, set her elbow a-going, until the drone gives two or three broken groans, and the chanter a squeak or two, like a child in the cholic, or a cat that you had trampled on by accident. Then comes the real ould Irish music, that warms the heart. Dan looks upon her graceful position, until the tears of love, taste, and admiration are coming down his cheeks. By and by, the toe of him moves: here another foot is going; and, in no time, there is a hearty dance, with a light heart and a good conscience. You or I, perhaps, drop in to see them, and, of course, we partake of the enjoyment."

"Divil a pleasanter," said Peter: "I tell you, I'd like it well; an', for my own part, if the deludher here has no objection, *I'm* not goin' to spoil sport."

Ellish looked hard at the priest; her keen blue eye glittered with a sparkling light, that gave decided proofs of her sagacity being intensely excited.

"All that you've said," she replied, "is very fine; but in regard o' the bag-pipes, an' Miss Granua Mulcahy's squeezin' the music out o' thim—why, if it plased God to bring my son to the staff an' bag—a common beggar—indeed, in that case, Miss Granua's

bag-pipes might sarve both o' thim, an' help, maybe, to get them a night's lodgin' or so; but until that time comes, if you respect your niece, you'll burn her bagpies, dhrone, chanther, an' all. If you *are* for a match, which I doubt, spake out, as I said, and say what fortune you'll pay down on the nail wid her, otherwise we're losin' our time, an' that's a loss one can't make up."

The priest, who thought he could have bantered Ellish into an alliance, without pledging himself to pay any specific fortune, found that it was necessary for him to treat the matter seriously, if he expected to succeed. He was certainly anxious for the match; and as he really wished to see his niece—who, in truth, was an excellent girl, and handsome—well settled, he resolved to make a stretch and secure Dan if possible.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "I will be brief with you. The most I can give her is three hundred pounds, and even that by struggling and borrowing. I will undertake to pay it as you say—on the nail! for I am really anxious that my niece should be connected with so worthy and industrious a family. What do you say?"

"*I'm* willin' enough," replied Peter. "It's not asy to get that wid a Catholic girl."

"There's some thruth in what you say, aroon, sure enough," observed Ellish; "an' if his Reverence puts another hundhre to it, why, in the name of goodness, let them go together. If you don't choose that, Docthor, never breathe the subject to me agin. Dan's not an ould man yit, an' has time enough to get wives *galore*."

"Come," replied the priest, "there's my hand, it's a bargain; although I must say there's no removing you from your point. I *will* give four hundred, hook or crook; but I'll have sad scrambling to get it together. Still I'll make it good."

"Down on the nail?" inquired Ellish.

"Ay! ay! Down on the nail," replied the priest.

"Well, in the name o' Goodness, a bargain be it," said Peter; "but, upon my credit, Ellish, I won't have the bag-pipes burnt, any how. Faith, I must hear an odd tune, now an' thin, when I call to see the childhre."

"Pether, acushla, have sinse. Would you wish to see your daughter-in-law playin' upon the bag-pipes, when she ought to be mindin' her business, or attendin' her childhre? No, your Reverence, the pipes must be laid aside. I'll have no piperly connexion for a son of mine."

The priest consented to this, although Peter conceded it with great reluctance. Further preliminaries were agreed upon, and the evening passed pleasantly, until it became necessary for Mr. Mulcahy to bid them good night.

When they were gone, Peter and Ellish talked over the matter between themselves in the following dialogue:

"The fortune's a small one," said Ellish to her husband; "an' I suppose you wondher that I consinted to take so little."

"Sure enough, I wondhered at it," replied Peter: "but, for my own part, I'd give my son to her widout a penny o' fortune, in ordher to be connected wid

the priest; an' besides, she's a fine, handsome, good girl—ay, an' his fill of a wife, if she had but the shift to her back."

"Four hundhre wid a priest's niece, Pether, is before double the money wid any other. Don't you know, that when they set up for themselves, he can bring the custom of the whole parish to them? It's unknown the number o' ways he can sarve them in. Sure, at stations an' weddins, wakes, marriages, and funerals, they'll all be proud to let the priest know that they purchased whatever they wanted from his niece an' her husband. Betther!—faix, four hundhre from *him* is worth three times as much from another."

"Glory to you, Ellish!—bright an' cute for ever! Why, I'd back you for a woman that could buy an' sell Europe, aginst the world. Now, isn't it odd that I never think of these long-headed skames?"

"Ay do you, often enough, Pether; but you keep them to yourself, abouchal."

"Faith, I'm close, no doubt of it; an'—but there's no use in sayin' any more about it—you said whatsomever came into my own head consarnin' it. Faith, you did, you phanix."

In a short time the marriage took place. Dan, under the advice of his mother, purchased a piece of ground most advantageously located, as the site of a mill, whereon an excellent one was built; and as a good mill had been long a desideratum in the country, his success was far beyond his expectations. Every speculation, in fact, which Ellish touched, prospered. Fortune seemed to take delight, either in accomplishing, or anticipating her wishes. At least, such was

the general opinion, although nothing could possibly be more erroneous than to attribute her success to mere chance. The secret of all might be ascribed to her good sense, and her exact knowledge of the precise moment when to take the tide of fortune at its flow. Her son, in addition to the mill, opened an extensive mercantile establishment in the next town, where he had ample cause to bless the instructions of his mother, and her foresight in calculating upon the advantage of being married to the priest's niece.

Soon after his marriage, the person who had for many years kept the head Inn of the next town died, and the establishment was advertised for sale. Ellish was immediately in action. Here was an opportunity of establishing the second son in a situation which had enabled the late proprietor of it to die nearly the richest man in the parish. A few days, therefore, before that specified for the sale, she took her feather-bed car, and had an interview with the executors of the late proprietor. Her character was known, her judgment and integrity duly estimated, and, perhaps, what was the weightiest argument in her favour, her purse was forthcoming to complete the offer she had made. After some private conversation between the executors, her proposal was accepted, and before she returned home, the head Inn, together with all its fixtures and furniture, was her property.

The second son, who was called after his father, received the intelligence with delight. One of his sisters was, at his mother's suggestion, appointed to conduct the house-keeping department, and keep the

bar, a duty for which she was pretty well qualified by her experience at home.

" I will paint it in great style," said Peter the Younger. " It must be a head Inn no longer; I'll call it a Hotel, for that's the whole fashion."

" It wants little, avourneen," said his mother; " it was well kep: some paintin' an' other improvements it does want, but don't be extravagant. Have it clane an' dacent, but, above all things, comfortable, an' the attindance good. That's what'll carry you an—not a flourish o' paintin' outside, an' dirt, an' confusion, an' bad attindance widin. Considher, Pether darlin', that the man who owned it last, feathered his nest well in it, but never called it a Hotill. Let it appear on the outside jist as your ould customers used to see it; but improve it widin as much as you can, widout bein' lavish an it, or takin' up the place wid nonsense."

" At all evints, I'll have a picture of the Liberator over the door, an' ' O'Connell' written under it. It's both our names, and besides it will be ' killin' two birds with one stone.' "

" No avourneen. Let me advise you, if you wish to prosper in life, to keep yourself out of party-work. It only stands betune you an' your business; an' its surely wiser for you to mind your own affairs than the affairs of the nation. There's rason in every thing. No man in trade has a right, widout committin' a sin, to neglect his family for politics or parties. There's Jack Cummins that was doin' well in his groceries, till he began to make speeches, an'

get up public meetins, an' write petitions, an' now he has nothin' to throuble him *but* politics, for his business is gone. Every one has liberty to think as they plase. We can't expect Protestants to think as we do, nor Protestants can't suppose that we ought to think as they'd wish; an' for that same rason, we should make allowance on both sides, an' not be like many we know, that have their minds up, expectin' they don't know what, instead of workin' for themselves an' their families as they ought to do. Pether, won't you give that up, a villish?"

"I believe you're right, mother. I didn't see it before in the light you've placed it in."

"Then, Pether, darlin', lose no time in gettin' into your place—you an' Alley; an' faix, if you don't both manage it cleverly, I'll never spake to yees."

Here was a second son settled, and nothing remained but to dispose of their two daughters in marriage to the best and most advantageous offers. This, in consequence of their large fortunes, was not a matter of much difficulty. The eldest, Alley, who assisted her brother to conduct the Inn, became the wife of an extensive grazier, who lived in another county. The younger, Mary, was joined to Father Mulcahy's nephew, not altogether to the satisfaction of the mother, who feared that two establishments of the same kind, in the same parish, supported by the same patronage, must thrive at the expense of each other. As it was something of a love-match, however, she ultimately consented.

"Avourneen," said she, "the parish is big enough, an' has customers enough to support them both; an'

I'll engage his Reverence will do what he can for both o' them."

In the mean time, neither she nor her husband was dependent upon their children. Peter still kept the agricultural department in operation; and although the shop and warehouse were transferred to Mr. Mulcahy, in right of his wife, yet it was under the condition of paying a yearly sum to Mrs. Connell and her husband, ostensibly as a provision, but really as a spur to their exertions. A provision they could not want, for their wealth still amounted to thousands, independently of the large annual profits arising out of their farms.

For some time after the marriage of her youngest daughter, Mrs. Connell took a very active part in her son-in-law's affairs. He possessed neither experience, nor any knowledge of business whatsoever, though he was not deficient in education, nor in capacity to acquire both. This pleased Mrs. Connell very much, who set herself to the task of instructing him in the principles of commercial life, and in the best methods of transacting business.

"The first rules," said she to him, "for you to obsarve is these: tell truth; be sober; be punctual; rise early; persavere; avoid extravagance; keep your word; an' watch your health. Next: don't be proud; give no offince; talk sweetly; be ready to oblage, when you can do it widout inconvanience, but don't put yourself or your business out o' your ways to sarve any body.

"Thirdly: keep an appearance of substance an' comfort about your place, but don't go beyant your

manes in doin' it; when you make a bargain, think what correcther them you dale wid bears, an' whether or not you found them honest before, if you ever had business wid them.

"When you buy a thing, appear to know your own mind, an' don't be hummin' an' hawin', an' higglin', an' longin' as if your teeth wor watherin' afther it; but be manly, downright, an' quick; they'll then see that you know your business, an' they won't be keepin' off an' an, but will close wid you at wanst.

"Never drink at bargain makin'; an' never pay money in a public-house if you can help it; if you must do it, go into an inn, or a house that you know to be dacent.

"Never stay out late in a fair or market; don't make a poor mouth; on the other hand, don't boast of your wealth; keep no low company; don't be rubbin' yourself aginst your betthers, but keep wid your aquils. File your loose papers an' accounts; an' keep your books up to the day. Never put off any thing that can be done, when it ought to be done. Go early to bed; but be the last up at night, and the first in the mornin', an' there's no fear o' you."

Having now settled all her children in comfort and independence, with each a prospect of rising still higher in the world, Mrs. Connell felt that the principal duties devolving upon her had been discharged. It was but reasonable, she thought, that, after the toil of a busy life, her husband and herself should relax a little, and enjoy with lighter minds the ease for which they had laboured so long and unremittingly.

"Do you know what I'm thinkin' of, Pether?" said she, one summer evening in their farm-yard.

"Know, is it?" replied Peter—"some long-headed plan that none of us 'ud ever think of, but that will stare us in the face the moment you mintion it. What is it, you ould sprig o' beauty?"

"Why, to get a snug jauntin'-car for you an' me. I'd like to see you comfortable in your ould days, Pether. You're gettin' stiff, a hagur, an' will be good for nothin', by an' by."

"Stiff! Arrah, by this an' by—my reputation, I'm younger nor e'er a one o' my sons yet, you—— eh?" said Peter, pausing—"Faith then I dunna that. Upon my credit, I think, on second thoughts, that a car 'ud be a mighty comfortable thing for me. Faith I do, an' for you, too, Ellish."

"The common car," she continued, "is slow an' throublesome, an' joults the life out o' me."

"By my reputation, you're not the same woman since you began to use it, that you wor before at all. Why, it'll shorten your life. The pillion's dacent enough; but the jauntin'-car!—faix, it's what 'ud make a fresh woman o' you—divil a lie in it."

"You're not puttin' in a word for *yourself* now Pether?"

"To be sure I am, an' for both of us. I'd surely be proud to see yourself an' myself sittin' in our glory upon our own jauntin'-car. Sure we can afford it, an' ought to have it too. Bud-an'-ager! what's the rason I didn't think of it long ago?"

"Maybe you did, acushla; but you forgot it.

Wasn't that the way wid you, Pether? Tell the thruth."

"Why, thin, bad luck to the lie in it, since you must know. About this time twelve months—no, faix, I'm wrong, it was afore Dan's marriage—I had thoughts o' spakin' to you about it, but somehow it left my head. Upon my word, I'm in arnest, Ellish."

"Well, avick, make your mind asy; I'll have one from Dublin in less nor a fortnight. I can thin go about of an odd time, an' see how Dan an' Pether's comin' an. It'll be a pleasure to me to advise an' direct thim, sure, as far an' as well as I can. I only hope God will enable thim to do as much for their childher, as he enabled us to do for them, glory be to his name!"

Peter's eye rested upon her as she spoke: a slight shade passed over his face, but it was the symptom of deep feeling and affection, whose current had run smooth and unbroken during the whole life they had spent together.

"Ellish," said he, in a tone of voice that strongly expressed what he felt, "you wor one o' the best wives that ever the Almighty gev to mortual man. You wor, avourneen—you wor, you wor!"

"I intind, too, to begin an' make my sowl a little," she continued; "we had so much to do, Pether, aroon, that, indeed, we hadn't time to think of it all along; but now, that every thing *else* is settled, we ought to think about *that*, an' make the most of our time while we can."

"Upon my conscience, I've strong notions myself

o' the same thing," replied Peter: "An' I'll back you in that, as well as in every thing else. Never fear, if we pull together, but we'll bring up the lost time. Faith, we will! Sowl, if *you* set about it, let me see them that 'ud prevint your goin' to heaven!"

"Did Paddy Donovan get the bay filly's foot ased, Pether?"

"He's gone down wid her to the forge: the poor crathur was very lame to-day."

"That's right; an' let Andy Murtagh bring down the sacks from Drumdough early to-morrow. That whate ought to go to the market on Thursday, an' the other stacks ought to be thrashed out off hand."

"Well, well; so it will be all done. Tare alive! if myself knows how you're able to keep an eye on every thing. Come in, an' let us have our *tay*."

For a few months after this, Ellish was perfectly in her element. The jaunting-car was procured; and her spirits seemed to be quite elevated. She paid regular visits to both her sons, looked closely into their manner of conducting business, examined their premises, and subjected every fixture and improvement made or introduced without her sanction, to the most rigorous scrutiny. In fact, what, between Peter's farm, her daughter's shop, and the establishments of her sons, she never found herself more completely encumbered with business. She had intended "to make her soul," but her time was so fully absorbed by the affairs of those in whom she felt so strong an interest, that she really forgot the spiritual resolution in the warmth of her secular pursuits.

One evening, about this time, a horse belonging to

Peter happened to fall into a ditch, from which he was extricated with much difficulty by the labourers. Ellish, who thought it necessary to attend, had been standing for some time directing them how to proceed; her dress was rather thin, and the hour, which was about twilight, chilly, for it was the middle of autumn. Upon returning home she found herself cold, and inclined to shiver. At first she thought but little of these symptoms; for having never had a single day's sickness, she was scarcely competent to know that they were frequently the forerunners of very dangerous and fatal maladies. She complained, however, of slight illness, and went to bed without taking any thing calculated to check what she felt. Her sufferings during the night were dreadful: high fever had set in with a fury that threatened to sweep the powers of life like a wreck before it. The next morning the family, on looking into her state more closely, found it nccessary to send instantly for a physician.

On arriving, he pronounced her to be in a dangerous pleurisy, from which, in consequence of her plethoric habit, he expressed but faint hopes of her recovery. This was melancholy intelligence to her sons and daughters; but to Peter, whose faithful wife she had been for thirty years, it was a dreadful communication indeed.

"No hopes, Docthor!" he exclaimed, with a bewildered air: "did you say no hopes, Sir?—Oh! no, you didn't—you couldn't say that there's no hopes!"

"The hopes of her recovery, Mr. Connell, are but slender."

"Docthor, I'm a rich man, thanks be to God an' to——" he hesitated, cast back a rapid and troubled look towards the bed whereon she lay, then proceeded —"no matther, I'm a rich man: but if you can spare her to me, I'll divide what I'm worth in this world wid you: I will, Sir; an' if that won't do, I'll give up my last shillin' to save her, an' thin I'd beg my bit an' sup through the counthry, only let me have *her* wid me."

"As far as my skill goes," said the doctor, "I shall, of course, exert it to save her; but there are some diseases which we are almost always able to pronounce fatal at first sight. This, I fear, is one of them. Still I do not bid you despair—there is, I trust, a shadow of hope."

"The blessin' o' the Almighty be upon you, Sir, for that word! The best blessin' o' the heavenly Father rest upon you an' yours for it!"

"I shall return in the course of the day," continued the physician; "and as you feel the dread of her loss so powerfully, I will bring two other medical gentlemen of skill with me."

"Heavens reward you for that, Sir! The heavens above reward you an' them for it! Payment!—och, that signifies but little; but you an' them 'ill be well paid. Oh, Docthor, achora, thry an' save her!—Och, thry an' save her!"

"Keep her easy," replied the doctor, "and let my directions be faithfully followed. In the mean time, Mr. Connell, be a man, and display proper fortitude under a dispensation which is common to all men in your state."

To talk of resignation to Peter was an abuse of words. The poor man had no more perception of the consolations arising from a knowledge of religion than a child. His heart sank within him, for the prop on which his affections had rested was suddenly struck down from under them.

Poor Ellish was in a dreadful state. Her malady seized her in the very midst of her worldlymindedness; and the current of her usual thoughts, when stopped by the aberrations of intellect peculiar to her illness, bubbled up, during the temporary returns of reason, with a stronger relish of the world. It was utterly impossible for a woman like her, whose habits of thought, and the tendency of whose affections, had been all directed towards the acquisition of wealth, to wrench them for ever and at once from the objects on which they were fixed. This, at any time, would have been to her a difficult victory to achieve; but now, when stunned by the stroke of disease, and confused by the pangs of severe suffering, tortured by a feverish pulse and a burning brain, to expect that she could experience the calm hopes of religion, or feel the soothing power of Christian sorrow, was utter folly. 'Tis true, her life had been a harmless one: her example, as an industrious and enterprising member of society, was worthy of imitation. She was an excellent mother, a good neighbour, and an admirable wife; but the duties arising out of these different relations of life, were all made subservient to, and mixed up with, her great principle of advancing herself in the world, whilst that which is to come never engaged one moment's serious consideration.

When Father Mulcahy came to administer the rites of the church to Ellish, he found her in a state of incoherency. Occasional gleams of reason broke out through the cloud that obscured her intellect, but they carried with them the marks of a mind knit indissolubly to wealth and aggrandizement. The same tenour of thought, and the same broken fragments of ambitious speculation, floated in rapid confusion through the tempests of delirium which swept with awful darkness over her spirit.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "can you collect yourself? Strive to compose your mind, so far as to be able to receive the aids of religion."

"Oh, oh!—my blood's boilin'! Is that—is that Father Mulcahy?"

"It is, dear: strive now to keep your mind calm, till you prepare yourself for judgment."

"Keep up his head, Paddy—keep up his head, or he'll be smothered undher the wather an' the sludge. Here, Mike, take this rope: pull, man, pull—*manim an diowol!*—pull, or the horse will be lost! Oh, my head!—I'm boilin'—I'm burnin'!"

"Mrs. Connell, let me entreat you to remember that you are on the point of death, and should raise your heart to God, for the pardon and remission of your sins."

"Oh! Father dear, I neglected that, but I intinded—I intinded——Where's Pether?—bring, bring—Pether to me!"

"Turn your thoughts to God now, my dear. Are you clear enough in your mind for confession?"

"I am, Father; I am avourneen. Come, come

here, Pether! Pether, I'm goin' to lave you, asthore machree! I could part wid them all but—but *you*."

"Mrs. Connell, for heaven's sake"——

"Is this—is this—Father Mulcahy? Oh! I'm ill—ill!"—

"It is, dear—it is. Compose yourself, and confess your sins."

"Where's Mary? She'll neglect—neglect to lay in a stock o' linen, although I—I———Oh, Father, avourneen! won't you pity me? I'm sick—oh, I'm very sick!"

"You are, dear—you are, God help you, very sick, but you'll be better soon. Could you confess, dear? —do you think you could?"

"Oh, this pain—this pain!—it's killin' me!—Pether—Pether, *a suillish machree*,* have you des—have you desarted me?"

The priest, conjecturing that if Peter made his appearance she might feel soothed, and perhaps sufficiently composed to confess, called him in from the next room.

"Here's Peter," said the priest, presenting him to her view—"Here's Peter, dear."

"Oh! what a load is on me!—this pain—this pain —is killin' me—won't you bring me Pether? Oh, what will I do? Who's there?"

The mental pangs of poor Peter were, perhaps, equal in intensity to those which she suffered physically.

"Ellish," said he, in smothered sobs—"Ellish,

* The light of my heart.

acushla machree, sure I'm wid you here; here I'm sittin' on the bed wid you, achora machree."

"Catch my hand, thin. Ah, Pether! won't you pity your Ellish?—Won't you pity me—won't you pity me? Oh! this pain—this pain—is killin' me!"

"It is, it is, my heart's delight—it's killin' us both. Oh, Ellish, Ellish! I wish I was dead sooner nor see you in this agony. I ever loved you!—I ever an' always loved you, avourneen dheelish;—but now I would give my heart's best blood, if it 'ud save you. Here's Father Mulcahy come."

"About the mon—about the money—Pether—what do you intind——Oh! my blood—my blood's a-fire!—Mother o' heaven!—Oh! this pain is—is takin' me from all—ALL!—Rise me up!"

"Here, my darlin'—treasure o' my heart—here—I'm puttin' your head upon my breast—upon *my* breast, Ellish, a hagur. Marciful Virgin—Father, dear," said Peter, bursting into bitter tears—"her head's like fire! Oh! Ellish, Ellish, Ellish!—but my heart's brakin' to feel this! Have marcy on her, sweet God—have marcy on her! Bear witness, Father of heaven—bear witness, an' hear the vow of a brakin' heart. I here solemnly promise, before God, to make, if I'm spared life an' health to do it, a Station on my bare feet to Lough Derg, if it plases you, sweet Father o' pity, to spare her to me this day! Oh! but the hand o' God, Father dear, is terrible!—feel her brow!—Oh! but it's terrible!"

"It *is* terrible," said the priest, "and terribly is it laid upon her, poor woman! Peter do not let this scene be lost. Remember it."

"Oh, Father dear, can I ever forget it?—can I ever forget seein' my darlin' in sich agony?"

"Pether," said the sick woman, "will you get the car ready for to-mor—to-morrow—till I look at that piece o' land that Dan bought, before he—he closes the bargain?"

"Father jewel!" said Peter, "can't you get the world banished out of her heart? Oh, I'd give all I'm worth to see that heart fixed upon God! I could bear to part wid her, for she must die some time; but to go wid this world's thoughts an' timptations ragin' strong in her heart—mockin' God, an' hope, an' religion, an' every thing!—oh! that I can't bear! Sweet Jasus, change her heart!—Queen o' heaven, have pity on her, an' save her!"

The husband wept with great sorrow as he uttered these words.

"Neither reasoning nor admonition can avail her," replied the priest, "she is so incoherent that no train of thought is continued for a single minute in her mind. I will, however, address her again. Mrs. Connell, will you make a struggle to pay attention to me for a few minutes? Are you not afraid to meet God? You are about to die!—prepare yourself for judgment."

"Oh, Father dear! I can't—I can't—I *am* af—afraid—Hooh!—hooh!—*God!* You *must* do somethin' for—for me! I ne-ver done any thing for myself."

"Glory be to God! that she has that much sinse, any way," exclaimed the husband. "Father, a hagur, I trust my vow was heard."

"Well, my dear—listen to me," continued the priest—"can you not make the best confession possible? Could you calm yourself for it?"

"Pether, avick machree—Pether,"—

"Ellish, avourneen, I'm here!—my darlin', I *am* your vick machree, an' ever was. Oh, Father! my heart's brakin'! I can't bear to part wid her. Father of heaven, pity us this day of throuble!"

"Be near me, Pether; stay wid me—I'm very lonely. Is this you, keepin' my head up?"

"It is, it is! I'll never lave you till—till"—

"Is the carman come from Dublin wid—wid the broad-cloth?"

"Father of heaven! she's gone back again!" exclaimed the husband. "Father, jewel! have you no prayers that you'd read for her? You wor ordained for these things, an' comin' from *you*, they'll have more strinth. Can you do nothin' to save my darlin'?"

"My prayers will not be wanting," said the priest: but I am watching for an interval of sufficient calmness, to hear her confession; and I very much fear that she will pass in darkness. At all events, I will anoint her by and by. In the mean time, we must persevere a little longer · she may become easier, for it often happens that reason gets clear immediately before death.

Peter sobbed aloud, and wiped away the tears that streamed from his cheeks. At this moment her daughter and son-in law stole in, to ascertain how she was, and whether the rites of the church had in any degree soothed or composed her.

"Come in, Denis," said the priest to his nephew, "you may both come in. Mrs. Mulcahy, speak to your mother: let us try every remedy that might possibly bring her to a sense of her awful state."

"Is she raving still?" inquired the daughter, whose eyes were red with weeping.

The priest shook his head;—"Ah, she is—she is! and I fear she will scarcely recover her reason before the judgment of heaven opens upon her!"

"Oh thin may the Mother of Glory forbid that!" exclaimed her daughter—"any thing at all but that! Can you do nothin' for her, uncle?"

"I'm doing all I can for her, Mary," replied the priest; "I'm watching a calm moment to get her confession, if possible."

The sick woman had fallen into a momentary silence, during which she caught the bed-clothes like a child, and felt them, and seemed to handle their texture, but with such an air of vacancy as clearly manifested that no corresponding association existed in her mind.

The action was immediately understood by all present. Her daughter again burst into tears; and Peter, now almost choked with grief, pressing the sick woman to his heart, kissed her burning lips.

"Father jewel," said the daughter, "there it is, and I feared it—*the sign*, uncle—the sign!—don't you see her gropin' the clothes? Oh, mother, darlin', darlin'!—are we goin' to lose you for ever?"

"Ellish, acushla oge machree! Ellish, Ellish—won't you spake one word to me afore you go?—Won't you take one farewell of *me*—of ME, aroon,

asthore, before you depart from us for ever!" exclaimed her husband.

"Feeling the bed-clothes," said the priest, "is not *always* a sign of death; I have known many to recover after it."

"Husht," said Peter—"husht!—Mary—Mary! Come here—hould your tongues! Oh, *its past*—it's past!—it's all past, an' gone—all hope's over! Heavenly Father!"

The daughter, in a paroxysm of wild grief, clasped her mother's recumbent body in her arms, and kissed her lips with a vehemence almost frantic. "You won't go, my darlin'—is it from your own Mary that you'd go? Mary, that you loved best of all your childhre!—Mary, that you always said, an' every body said, was your own image!—Oh, you won't go without one word, to say you know her!"

"For heaven's sake," said Father Mulcahy, "what do you mean?—are you mad?"

"Oh! uncle dear! don't you hear?—don't you hear?—listen, an' sure you will—all hope's *gone* now—gone—gone! *The dead rattle!*—listen!—the dead rattle's in her throat!"——

The priest bent his ear a moment, and distinctly heard the gurgling noise produced by the phlegm, which is termed, with wild poetical accuracy, by the peasantry—the "dead rattle," because it is the immediate and certain forerunner of death.

"True," said the priest—"too true; the last shadow of hope is gone. We must now make as much of the time as possible. Leave the room for a few minutes, till I anoint her. I will then call you in."

They accordingly withdrew, but in about fifteen or twenty minutes he once more summoned them to the bed of the dying woman.

"Come in," said he, "I have anointed her—come in, and kneel down till we offer up a Rosary to the Blessed Virgin, under the hope that she may intercede with God for her, and cause her to pass out of life happily. She was calling for you, Peter, in your absence; you had better stay with her."

"I will," said Peter, in a broken voice, "I'll stay no where else."

"An' I'll kneel at the bed-side," said the daughter. "She was the kind mother to me, and to us all; but to me in particular. 'Twas with me she took her choice to live, when they war all striving for her. Oh," said she, taking her mother's hand between hers, and kneeling down to kiss it, "a Vahr dheelish!* did we ever think to see you departing from us this way! snapped away without a minute's warning! If it was a long sickness, that you'd be calm and sinsible in; but to be hurried away into eternity, and your mind dark! Oh, Vahr dheelish, my heart is broke to see you this way!"

"Be calm," said the priest—"be quiet till I open the Rosary."

He then offered up the usual prayers which precede its repetition, and after having concluded them, commenced what is properly called the Rosary itself, which consists of fifteen Decades, each Decade containing the Hail Mary repeated ten times, and the Lord's prayer once. In this manner the Decade

* Sweet mother!

goes round from one to another, until, as we have said above, it is repeated fifteen times; or, in all the *Ave Marias* one hundred and sixty-five times, without variation. From the indistinct utterance, elevated voice, and rapid manner in which it is pronounced, it certainly is wild, and strongly impressed with the character of a mystic rite, or incantation, rather than with that of a calm and humbled spirit, bending down in sorrow before its offended God.

When the priest repeated the first part, he paused for the response; neither the husband nor daughter, however, could find utterance.

"Denis," said he, to his nephew, "do you take up the next."

His nephew complied; and with much difficulty Peter and his daughter were able to join in it, repeating here and there a word or two, as well as their grief and sobbings would permit them.

The heart must indeed have been an unfeeling one, to which a scene like this would not have been deeply touching and impressive. The poor dying woman reclined with her head upon her husband's bosom; her daughter knelt at the bed-side, with her mother's hand pressed against her lips, she herself convulsed with sorrow—the priest was in the attitude of earnest supplication, having the stole about his neck, his face and arms raised towards heaven—the son-in-law was bent over a chair, with his face buried in his hands Nothing could exceed the deep, the powerful expression of entreaty, which marked every tone and motion of the parties, especially those of the husband and daughter. They poured an energy into the few

words which they found voice to utter, and displayed such a concentration of the faculties of the soul in their wild unregulated attitudes, and streaming upturned eyes, as would seem to imply that their own salvation depended upon that of the beloved object before them. Their words, too, were accompanied by such expressive tokens of their attachment to her, that the character of prayer was heightened by the force of the affection which they bore her. When Peter, for instance, could command himself to utter a word, he pressed his dying wife to his bosom, and raised his eyes to heaven in a manner that would melt any human heart; and the daughter, on joining occasionally in the response, pressed her mother's hand to her heart, and kissed it with her lips, conscious that the awful state of her parent had rendered more necessary the performance of the two tenderest duties connected with a child's obedience—prayer and affection.

When the son-in-law had finished his Decade, a pause followed, for there was none now to proceed but her husband or her daughter.

"Mary, dear," said the priest, "be a woman; don't let your love for your mother prevent you from performing a higher duty. Go on with the prayer—you see she is passing fast."

"I'll try, uncle," she replied—"I'll try; but—but—it's hard, hard, upon me."

She commenced, and by an uncommon effort so far subdued her grief, as to render her words intelligible. Her eyes, streaming with tears, were fixed with a mixture of wildness, sorrow, and devotedness,

upon the countenance of her mother, until she had completed her Decade.

Another pause ensued. It was now necessary, according to the order and form of the Prayer, that Peter should commence, and offer up his supplications for the happy passage from life to eternity of her who had been his inward idol during a long period. Peter knew nothing about sentiment, or the philosophy of sorrow; but he loved his wife with the undivided power of a heart in which nature had implanted her strongest affections. He knew, too, that his wife had loved him with a strength of heart equal to his own. He loved her, and she deserved his love.

The pause, when the prayer had gone round to him, was long: those who were present at length turned their eyes towards him, and the priest, now deeply affected, cleared his voice, and simply said, "Peter," to remind him that it was his duty to proceed with the Rosary.

Peter, however, instead of uttering the prayer, burst out into a tide of irrepressible sorrow.—"Oh!" said he, enfolding her in his arms, and pressing his lips to hers: "Ellish, ahagur machree! sure when I think of all the goodness, an' kindness, an' tendherness that you showed me—whin I think of your smiles upon me, whin you wanted me to do the right, an' the innocent plans you made out, to benefit me an' mine!—Oh! where was your harsh word, a villish? —where was your cowld brow, or your bad tongue? Nothin' but goodness—nothin' but kindness, an' love, an' wisdom, ever flowed from these lips! An' now,

darlin,' pulse o' my broken heart! these same lips can't spake to me—these eyes don't know me—these hands don't feel me—nor your ears doesn't hear me!"

"Is—is—it *you?*" replied his wife, feebly—"is it—you?—come—come near me—my heart—my heart says it misses *you*—come near me!"

Peter again pressed her in an embrace, and in doing so, unconsciously received the parting breath of a wife whose prudence and affection had saved him from poverty, and, probably, from such licentious crimes as latter years and the progress of modern events have multiplied in this ill-fated country.

The priest, on turning round to rebuke Peter for not proceeding with the prayer, was the first who discovered that she had died; for the grief of her husband was too violent to permit him to notice any thing with much accuracy.

"Peter," said he, "I beg your pardon; let me take the trouble of supporting her for a few minutes, after which I must talk to you seriously—very seriously."

The firm, authoritative tone in which the priest spoke, together with Peter's consciousness that he had acted wrongly by neglecting to join in the Rosary, induced him to retire from the bed with a rebuked air. The priest immediately laid back the head of Mrs. Connell on the pillow, and composed the features of her lifeless face with his own hands. Until this moment none of them, except himself, knew that she was dead.

"Now," continued he, "all her cares, and hopes, and speculations, touching this world are over—so is

her pain; her blood will soon be cold enough, and her head will ache no more. She is dead. Grief is therefore natural; but let it be the grief of a man, Peter. Indeed, it is less painful to look upon her now, than when she suffered such excessive agony. Mrs. Mulcahy, hear me! Oh, it's in vain! Well, well, it *is* but natural; for it was an unexpected and a painful death!"

The cries of her husband and daughter soon gave intimation to her servants that her pangs were over. From the servants it immediately went to the neighbours, and thus did the circle widen until it reached the furthest ends of the parish. In a short time, also, the mournful sounds of the church-bell, in slow and measured strokes, gave additional notice that a Christian soul had passed into eternity.

It is in such scenes as these that the Roman Catholic clergy knit themselves so strongly into the affections of the people. All men are naturally disposed to feel the offices of kindness and friendship more deeply, when tendered at the bed of death or of sickness, than under any other circumstances. Both the sick-bed and the house of death are necessarily the sphere of a priest's duty, and to render them that justice which we will ever render them, when and wheresoever it may be due, we freely grant that many shining, nay, noble, instances of Christian virtue are displayed by them on such occasions.

When the violence of grief produced by Eilish's death had subsided, the priest, after giving them suitable exhortations to bear the affliction which had just befallen them with patience, told Peter, that as God,

through the great industry and persevering exertions of her who had then departed to another world, had blessed him abundantly with wealth and substance, it was, considering the little time which had been allowed her to repent in a satisfactory manner for her transgressions, his bounden and solemn duty to set aside a suitable portion of that wealth for the delivery of her soul from purgatory, where, he trusted, in the mercy of God, it was permitted to remain.

" Indeed, your Reverence," replied Peter, " it wasn't necessary to mintion it, considherin' the way she was cut off from among us, widout even time to confess."

" But blessed be God," said the daughter, " she received the ointment at any rate, and that of itself would get her to purgatory."

" And I can answer for her," said Peter, " that she *intended*, as soon as she'd get every thing properly settled for the childhre, to make her sowl."

" Ah ! good intentions !" said the priest. " Did you never hear that the floor of hell is paved with good intentions ? I, however, have forewarned you of your duty, and must now leave the guilt or the merit of relieving her departed spirit, upon you and the other members of her family, who are all bound to leave nothing undone that may bring her from pain and fire, to peace and happiness."

" Och ! och ! asthore, asthore ! you're lyin' there —an', oh, Ellish, avourneen, could you think that I —*I*—would spare money—trash—to bring you to glory wid the angels o' heaven ! No, no, Father dear. It's good, an' kind, an' thoughtful of you to

put it into my head; but I didn't intind to neglect or forget it. Oh, how will I live wantin' her, Father? When I rise in the mornin', a villish, where'll be your smile and your voice? We won't hear your step, nor see you as we used to do, movin' pleasantly about the place. No—you're gone, avourneen—gone—an' we'll see you and hear you no more!"

His grief was once more about to burst forth, but the priest led him out of the room, kindly chid him for the weakness of his immoderate sorrow, and after making arrangements about the celebration of mass for the dead, pressed his hand, and bade the family farewell.

The death of Ellish excited considerable surprise, and much conversation in the neighbourhood. Every point of her character was discussed freely, and the comparisons instituted between her and Peter were any thing but flattering to the intellect of her husband.

"An' so Ellish is whipped off, Larry," said a neighbour to one of Peter's labouring men. Faix, an' the best feather in their wing is gone."

"Ay, sure enough, Risthard, you may say that. It was her cleverness made them what they are. She was the best manager in the three kingdoms."

"Ah, she was the woman could make a bargain. I only hope she hasn't brought the luck o' the family away wid her!"

"Why, man alive, she made the sons and daughters as clever as herself—put them up to every thing. Indeed, it's quare to think of how that one woman brought them an, an' ris them to what they are!"

"They shouldn't forget themselves as they're

doin', thin; for betune you an' me, they're as proud as Turks, an' God he sees it ill becomes them—sits very badly on them itself, when every body knows that their father an' mother begun the world wid a bottle of private whiskey an' half a pound of smuggled tobaccy."

"Poor Pether will break his heart, any way. Oh, man, but she was the good wife. I'm livin' wid them goin' an seven year, an' never hard a cross word from the one to the other. It's she that had the sweet tongue all out, an' *did* manage him; but, afther all, he was worth the full o' the Royal George of her. Many a time, when some poor crathur 'ud come to ax whiskey on score *to put over** some o' their friends, or for a weddin', or a christenin', maybe, an' when the wife 'ud refuse it, Pether 'ud send what whiskey they wanted afther them, widout lettin' her know any thing about it. An', indeed, he never lost any thing by that; for if they wor to sell their cow, he should be ped, in regard of the kindly way he gave it to them."

"Well, we'll see how they'll manage now that she's gone: but Pether an' the youngest daughther, Mary, is to be pitied."

"The sarra much; barrin' that they'll miss her at first from about the place. You see she has left them above the world, an' full of it. Wealth an' substance enough may they thank her for; an' that's very good comfort for sorrow, Risthard."

* To put over—the *corpse* of a friend. That is to be drunk at the wake and funeral.

Faith, sure enough, Larry. There's no lie in that, any way!"

"Awouh! Lie! I have you about it."

Such was the view which had been taken of their respective characters through life. Yet notwithstanding that the hearts of her acquaintances never *warmed to her*—to use a significant expression current among the peasantry—as they did to Peter, still she was respected almost involuntarily for the indefatigable perseverance with which she pushed forward her own interests through life. Her funeral was accordingly a large one; and the conversation which took place at it, turning, as it necessarily did, upon her extraordinary talents and industry, was highly to the credit of her memory and virtues. Indeed, the attendance of many respectable persons of all creeds and opinions, gave ample proof that the qualities she possessed had secured for her general respect and admiration.

Poor Peter, who was an object of great compassion, felt himself completely crushed by the death of his faithful partner. The reader knows that he had hitherto been a sober, and, owing to Ellish's prudent control, an industrous man. To thought or reflection he was not, however, accustomed; he had, besides, never received any education; if his morals were correct, it was because a life of active employment kept him engaged in pursuits which repressed immorality, and separated him from those whose society and influence might have been prejudicial to him. He had scarcely known calamity, and when it occurred he was prepared for it neither by experience, nor a correct view of moral duty. On the morning of his

wife's funeral, such was his utter prostration both of mind and body, that even his own sons, in order to resist the singular state of collapse into which he had sunk, urged him to take some spirits. He was completely passive in their hands, and complied. This had the desired effect, and he found himself able to attend the funeral. When the friends of Ellish, after the interment, assembled, as is usual, to drink and talk together, Peter, who could scarcely join in the conversation, swallowed glass after glass of punch with great rapidity. In the mean time, the talk became louder and more animated; the punch, of course, began to work, and as they sat long, it was curious to observe the singular blending of mirth and sorrow, singing and weeping, laughter and tears which characterised this remarkable scene. Peter, after about two hours hard drinking, was not an exception to the influence of this trait of national manners. His heart having been deeply agitated, was the more easily brought under the effects of contending emotions. He was naturally mirthful, and when intoxication had stimulated the current of his wonted humour, the influence of this and his recent sorrow, produced such an anomalous commixture of fun and disconsolation as could seldom, out of Ireland, be seen checkering the mind of one individual.

It was in the midst of this extraordinary din that his voice was heard commanding silence in its loudest and best humoured key:

"Hould yer tongues," said he; "bad win to yees, don't you hear me wantin' to sing. Whist wid yees. Hem—och—'Rise up'— Why, thin, Phil Callaghan,

you might thrate me wid more dacency, if you had gumption in you ; I'm sure no one has a betther right to sing first in this company nor myself ; an' what's more, I *will* sing first. Hould your tongues ! Hem !"

He accordingly commenced a popular song, the air of which, though simple, was touchingly mournful.

" Och, rise up, Willy Reilly, an' come alongst wid me,
I'm goin' for to go wid you, and lave this coun-ter-ee;
I'm goin' to lave my father, his castles and free lands—
An' away wint Willy Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn.

" Och, they wint o'er hills an' mountains, and vallies that was fair,
An' fled before her father, as you may shortly hear ;
Her father followed afther wid a well-chosen armed band,
Och, an' taken was poor Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn."

The simple pathos of the tune, the affection implied by the words, and probably the misfortune of Willy Reilly, all overcame him. He finished the second verse with difficulty, and on attempting to commence a third he burst into tears.

" Colleen bawn ! (fair, or fair-haired, girl)—Colleen bawn !" he exclaimed ; " she's lyin' low that was *my* colleen bawn ! Oh, will yees hould your tongues, an' let me think of what has happened me ? She's gone : Mary, avourneen, isn't she gone from us ? I'm alone, an' I'll be always lonely. Who have I now to comfort me ? I know I have good childhre, neighbours ; but none o' them, all of them, if they wor ten times as many, isn't aquil to her that's in the grave. Her hands won't be about me—there was tindherness in their very touch. An', of a Sunday mornin', how

she'd tie an my handkerchy, for I never could rightly tie it an myself, the knot was ever an' always too many for me; but, och, och, she'd tie it an so snug an' purty wid her own hands, that I didn't look the same man! The same song was her favourite. Here's your healths; an' sure it's the first time ever we wor together that she wasn't wid us: but now, avillish, you're voise is gone—you're silent an' lonely in the grave; an' why shouldn't I be sarry for the wife o' my heart that never angered me? Why shouldn't I? Ay, Mary, asthore machree, good right you have to cry afther her; she was the kind mother to you; her heart was fixed in you; there's her fatures an your face; her very eyes, an' fair hair, too, an' I'll love you, achora, ten times more nor ever, for her sake. Another favourite song of hers, God rest her, was 'Brian O'Lynn.' Throth an' I'll sing it, so I will, for if she was livin' she'd like it.

> "Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
> A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail."

Och, my head's through other! The sarra one o' me, I bleeve, but's out o' the words, or, as they say, there's a hole in the ballad. Send round the punch will yees? By the hole o' my coat, Parra Gastha, I'll whale you widin an inch of your life, if you don't dhrink. Send round the Punch, Dan; an' give us a song, Parra Gastha. Arrah, Paddy, do you remimber—ha, ha, ha—upon my credit, I'll never forget it, the fun we had catchin' Father Soolaghan's horse, the day he gave his shirt to the sick man in the

ditch. The Lord rest his sowl in glory—ha, ha, ha—I'll never forget it. Paddy, the song, you thief?"

"No, but tell them about that, Misther Connell."

"Throth, an' I will; but don't be *Mistherin* me. Faith, this is the height o' good punch. You see—ha, ha, ha! You see, it was one hard summer afore I was marrid to Ellish—mavourneen, that you wor, asthore! Och, och, are we parted at last? Upon my sowl, my heart's breakin' breakin', (*weeps*); an' no wondher! But as I was sayin'—all your healths! faith, it *is* tip-top punch that—the poor man fell sick of a faver, an' sure enough, when it was known what ailed him, the neighbours built a little shed on the roadside for him, in regard that every one was afeard to let him into their place. Howsomever—ha, ha, ha—Father Soolaghan was one day ridin' past upon his horse, an' seein' the crathur lyin' undher the shed, an a wishp o' sthraw, he pulls bridle, an' puts the spake an the poor sthranger. So, begad, it came out, that the neighbours were very kind to him, an' used to hand over whatsomever they thought best for him from the back o' the ditch, as well as they could.

"'My poor fellow,' said the priest, 'you're badly off for linen.'

"'Thrue for you, Sir,' said the sick man, 'I never longed for any thing so much in my life, as I do for a clane shirt an' a glass o' whiskey.'

"'The devil a glass o' whiskey I have about me, but you shall have the clane shirt, you poor compassionate crathur,' said the priest, stretchin' his neck up an' down, to make sure there was no one comin' on the road—ha, ha, ha!

" Well an' good—' I have *three* shirts,' says his Reverence, ' but I have only one o' them an me, an' that you shall have.'

" So the priest peels himself on the spot, an' lays his black coat and waistcoat afore him acrass the saddle, thin takin' off his shirt, he *threwn* it acrass the ditch to the sick man. Whether it was the white shirt, or the black coat danglin' about the horse's neck, the divil a one o' myself can say, but any way, the baste tuck fright, an' made off wid Father Soolaghan, in the state I'm tellin' yees, upon his back—ha, ha, ha!

" Parra Gastha, here, an' I war goin' up at the time to do a little in the distillin' way for Tom Duggan of Aidinasamlagh, an' seen what was goin' an. So off we set, an' we splittin' our sides laughin'—ha, ha, ha—at the figure the priest cut. However, we could do no good, an' he never could pull up the horse, till he came full flight to his own house, opposite the pound there below, and the whole town in convulsions when they seen him. We *gother* up his clothes, an' brought them home to him, an' a good piece o' fun we had wid him, for he loved the joke as well as any man. Well, he was the good an' charitable man, the same Father Soolaghan; but so simple that he got himself into fifty scrapes, God rest him! Och, och, she's lyin' low that often laughed at that, an' I'm here—ay, I have no one, no one that 'ud show me sich a warm heart as she would. (*weeps.*) However, God's will be done. I'll sing yees a song she liked :

Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail.'

Musha, I'm out agin—ha, ha, ha! Why, I b'lieve there's pishthrogues an me, or I'd remimber it. Bud-an-age, dhrink all of yees. Lie in to the liquor, I say; don't spare it. Here, Mike, send us up another gallon. Faith, we'll make a night of it.

'Och, three madens a milkin' did go,
An' three maidens a milkin' did go;
An' the winds they blew high,
An' the winds they blew low,
An' they dashed their milkin' pails to an' fro.'

All your healths, childhre! Neighbours, all your healths! don't spare what's before yees. It's long since I tuck a jorum myself an—come, I say, plase God, we'll often meet this way, so we will. Faith, I'll take a sup from this forrid, wid a blessin'. Dhrink, I say, dhrink!"

By the time he had arrived at this pitch, he was able to engross no great portion either of the conversation or attention. Almost every one present had his songs, his sorrows, his laughter, or his anecdotes, as well as himself. Every voice was loud, and every tongue busy. Intricate and entangled was the talk, which, on the present occasion, presented a union of all the extremes which the lights and shadows of the Irish character alone could exhibit under such a calamity as that which brought the friends of the deceased together.

Peter literally fulfilled his promise of taking a jorum in future. He was now his own master; and as he felt the loss of his wife deeply, he unhappily had recourse to the bottle, to bury the recollection of a woman, whose death left a chasm in his heart, which he thought nothing but the whiskey could fill up.

His transition from a life of perfect sobriety to one of habitual, nay, of daily intoxication, was immediate. He could not bear to be sober; and his extraordinary bursts of affliction, even in his cups, were often calculated to draw tears from the eyes of those who witnessed them. He usually went out in the morning with a flask of whiskey in his pocket, and sat down to weep behind a ditch—where, however, after having emptied his flask, he might be heard at a great distance, singing the songs which Ellish in her life-time was accustomed to love. In fact, he was generally pitied; his simplicity of character, and his benevolence of heart, which was now exercised without fear of responsibility, made him more a favourite than he ever had been. His former habits of industry were thrown aside; as he said himself, he hadn't heart to work; his farms were neglected, and but for his son-in-law, would have gone to ruin. Peter himself was sensible of this.

"Take them," said he, "into your own hands, Denis; for me, I'm not able to do any thing more at them; she that kep me up is gone, an' I'm broken down. Take them—take them into your own hands. Give me my bed, bit, an' sup, an' that's all I want."

Six months produced an incredible change in his

appearance. Intemperance, whilst it shattered his strong frame, kept him in frequent exuberance of spirits; but the secret grief preyed on him within. Artificial excitement kills, but it never cures; and Peter, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was wasting away into a shadow. His children, seeing him go down the hill of life so rapidly, consulted among each other on the best means of winning him back to sobriety. This was a difficult task, for his powers of bearing liquor were almost prodigious. He has often been known to drink so many as twenty-five, and sometimes thirty tumblers of punch, without being taken off his legs, or rendered incapable of walking about. His friends, on considering who was most likely to recall him to a more becoming life, resolved to apply to his landlord—the gentleman whom we have already introduced to our readers. He entered warmly into their plan, and it was settled, that Peter should be sent for, and induced, if possible, to take an oath against liquor. Early the following day a liveried servant came down to inform him that his master wished to speak with him.

"To be sure," said Peter; "divil resave the man in all Europe I'd do more for than the same gintleman, if it was only on account of the regard he had for her that's gone. Come, I'll go wid you in a minute."

He accordingly returned with the flask in his hand, saying, "I never thrave! dout a pocket-pistol, John. The times, you see, is not overly safe, an' the best way is to be prepared!—ha, ha, ha! Och, och! It houlds three half-pints."

"I think," observed the servant, "you had better not taste that till after your return."

"Come away, man," said Peter; "we'll talk upon it as we go along: I couldn't do readily widout it. You hard that I lost Ellish?"

"Yes," replied the servant, "and I was very sorry to hear it."

"Did you attind the berrin?"

"No, but my master did," replied the man; "for, indeed, his respect for your wife was very great, Mr. Connell."

This was before ten o'clock in the forenoon, and about one in the afternoon, a stout countryman was seen approaching the gentleman's house, with another man bent round his neck, where he hung precisely as a calf hangs round the shoulders of a butcher, when he is carrying it to his stall.

"Good heavens!" said the owner of the mansion to his lady, "what has happened John Smith, my dear? Is he dead?"

"Dead!" said his lady, going in much alarm to the drawing-room window: "I protest I fear so, Frank. He is evidently dead! For God's sake go down and see what has befallen him."

Her husband went hastily to the hall-door, where he met Peter with his burden.

"In the name of heaven, what has happened, Connell?—what is the matter with John? Is he living or dead?"

First, plase your honour, as I have him on my shouldhers, will you tell me where his bed is?" replied Peter. "I may as well lave him snug, as my

hand's in, poor fellow. The divil's bad head he has, your honour. Faith, it's a burnin' shame, so it is, an' nothin' else—to be able to bear so little!"

The lady, children, and servants, were now all assembled about the dead footman, who hung, in the mean time, very quietly round Peter's neck.

"Gracious heaven! Connell, is the man dead?" she inquired.

"Faith, thin, he is, Ma'am, for a while; but, upon my credit, it's a burnin' shame, so it is,"——

"The man is drunk, my dear," said her husband —"he's only drunk."

"——a burnin' shame, so it is—to be able to bear no more nor about six glasses, an' the whiskey good, too. Will you ordher one o' thim to show me his bed, Ma'am, if you plase," continued Peter, "while he's an me? It 'ill save throuble."

"Connell is right," observed his landlord.—"Gallagher, show him John's bed-room."

Peter accordingly followed another servant, who pointed out his bed, and assisted to place the vanquished footman in a somewhat easier position than that in which Peter had carried him.

"Connell," said his landlord, when he returned, "how did this happen?"

"Faith, thin it's a burnin' shame," said Connell, "to be able only to bear"——

"But *how* did it happen? for he has been hitherto a perfectly sober man."

"Faix, plase your honour, asy enough," replied Peter; "he begun to lecthur me about dhrinkin', so, says I, 'come an' sit down behind the hedge here, an'

we'll talk it over between us;' so we went in, the two of us, a-back o' the ditch—an' he began to advise me agin dhrink, an' I began to tell him about her that's gone, Sir. Well, well! och, och! no matther!—So, Sir, one story an' one pull from the bottle, brought on another, for divil a glass we had at all, Sir. Faix, he's a tindher hearted boy, anyhow; for as myself begun to let the tears down, whin the bottle was near out, divil resave the morsel of him but cried afther poor Ellish, as if she had been his mother. Faix, he did! An' it won't be the last sup we'll have together, plase goodness! But the best of it was, Sir, that the dhrunker he got, he abused me the more for dhrinkin'. Oh, thin, but he's the pious boy whin he gets a sup in his head! Faix, it's a pity ever he'd be sober, he talks so much scripthur an' devotion in his liquor!"

"Connell," said the landlord, "I am exceedingly sorry to hear that you have taken so openly and inveterately to drink as you have done, ever since the death of your admirable wife. This, in fact, was what occasioned me to send for you. Come into the parlour. Don't go, my dear, perhaps *your* influence may also be necessary. Gallagher, look to Smith, and see that every attention is paid him, until he recovers the effects of his intoxication."

He then entered the parlour, where the following dialogue took place between him and Peter:—

"Connell, I am really grieved to hear that you have become latterly so incorrigible a drinker; I sent for you to-day, with the hope of being able to induce you to give it up."

"Faix, your honour, it's jist what I'd expect from

your father's son—kindness, an' dacency, an' devotion, wor always among yees. Divil resave the family in all Europe I'd do so much for as the same family."

The gentleman and lady looked at each other, and smiled. They knew that Peter's blarney was no omen of their success in the laudable design they contemplated.

"I thank you, Peter, for your good opinion; but in the mean time, allow me to ask, what can you propose to yourself by drinking so incessantly as you do?"

"What do I propose to myself by dhrinkin', is it? Why thin to banish grief, your honour. Surely you'll allow that no man has rason to complain who's able to banish the thief for two shillin's a day. I reckon the whiskey at first cost, so that it doesn't come to more nor that, at the very outside."

"That is taking a commercial view of affliction, Connell; but you must promise me to give up drinking."

"Why thin upon my credit, your honour astonishes me. Is it to give up banishin' grief? I have a regard for you, Sir, for many a dalins we had together; but for all that, faix, I'd be miserable for no man, barrin' for her that's gone. If I'd be so to oblage any one, I'd do it for your family; for divil resave the family in all Europe"——

"Easy, Connell—I am not to be palmed off in that manner; I really have a respect for the character which you bore, and wish you to recover it once more. Consider that you are disgracing yourself and your

children by drinking so excessively from day to day—indeed, I am told almost from hour to hour."

"Augh! don't believe the half o' what you hear, Sir. Faith, somebody has been dhrawin' your honour out! Why I'm never dhrunk, Sir; faith, I'm not."

"You will destroy your health, Connell, as well as your character; besides, you are not to be told that it is a sin, a crime against God, and an evil example to society."

"Show me the man, plase your honour, that ever seen me *incapable*. That's the proof o' the thing."

"But why do you drink at all? It is not necessary."

"An' do *you* never taste a dhrop yourself, Sir, plase your honour? I'll be bound you do, Sir, raise your little finger of an odd time, as well as another. Eh, Ma'am? That's comin' close to his honour! An' faix, small blame to him, an' a weeshy sup o' the wine to the misthress herself, to correct the tindherness of her dilicate appetite."

"Peter, this bantering must not pass: I think I have a claim upon your respect and deference. I have uniformly been *your* friend, and the friend of your children and family, but more especially of your late, excellent, and exemplary wife."

"Before God an' man, I acknowledge that, Sir—I do—I do. But, Sir, to spake sarious—it's thruth, Ma'am, downright—to spake sarious, my heart's broke, an' every day it's brakin' more an' more. She's gone, Sir, that used to manage me; an' now I can't turn myself to any thing, barrin' the dhrink—God help me!"

"I honour you, Connell, for the attachment which you bear towards the memory of your wife, but I utterly condemn the manner in which you display it. To become a drunkard is to disgrace her memory. You know it was a character she detested."

"I know it all, Sir, an' that you have thruth an' rason on your side; but, Sir, you never lost [a wife that you loved; an' long may you be so, I pray the heavenly Father this day! Maybe if you did, Sir, plase your honour, that, wid your heart sinkin' like a stone widin you, you'd thry whether or not *something* couldn't rise it. Sir, only for the dhrink I'd be dead."

"There I totally differ from you, Connell. The drink only prolongs your grief, by adding to it the depression of spirits which it always produces. Had you not become a drinker, you would long before this have been once more a cheerful, active, and industrious man. Your sorrow would have worn away gradually, and nothing but an agreeable melancholy —an affectionate remembrance of your excellent wife —would have remained. Look at other men."

"But where's the man, Sir, had *sich* a wife to grieve for as she was? Don't be hard on me, Sir. I'm not a dhrunkard. It's thrue I dhrink a great dale; but thin I can bear a great dale, so that I'm never incapable."

"Connell," said the lady, "you will break down your constitution, and bring yourself to an earlier death than you would otherwise meet."

"I care very little, indeed, how soon I was dead, not makin' you, Ma'am, an ill answer."

"Oh fie, Connell, for you, a sensible man and a Christian, to talk in such a manner!"

"Throth, thin, I don't, Ma'am. *She's* gone, an' I'd be glad to folly her as soon as I could. Yes, asthore, you're departed from me! an' now I'm gone asthray—out o' the right, an' out o' the good! Oh, Ma'am," he proceeded, whilst the tears rolled fast down his cheeks, "if you knew her—her last words too—Oh, she was—she was—but where's the use o' sayin' what she was?—I beg your pardon, Ma'am,—your honour, Sir, 'ill forgive my want o' manners: sure I know it's bad breedin', but I can't help it."

"Well, promise," said his landlord, "to give up drink. Indeed, I wish you would take an oath against it: you are a conscientious man, and I know would keep it, otherwise I should not propose it, for I discountenance such oaths generally. Will you promise me this, Connell?"

"I'll promise to think of it, your honour,—aginst takin' a sartin quantity, at any rate."

"If you refuse it, I'll think you are unmindful of the good feeling which we have ever shown your family."

"What?—do you think, Sir, I'm ungrateful to you? That's a sore cut, Sir, to make a villain o' me. Where's the book?—I'll swear this minute. Have you a Bible, Ma'am?—I'll show you that I'm not mane, any way."

"No, Connell, you shall not do it rashly; you must be cool and composed: but go home, and turn it in your mind," she replied; "and remember, that it is the request of me and my husband, for your own good."

"Neither must you swear before me," said his landlord, "but before Mr. Mulcahy, who, as it is an oath connected with your moral conduct, is the best person to be present. It must be voluntary, however. Now, good bye, Connell, and think of what we said; but take care never to carry home any of my servants in the same plight in which you put John Smith to-day."

"Faix thin, Sir, *he* had no business, wid your honour's livery upon his back, to begin leecthurin' me agin dhrinkin', as he did. We may all do very well, Sir, till the timptation crasses us—but that's what thries us. It thried him, but he didn't *stand* it—faix he didn't!—ha, ha, ha! Good mornin' Sir—God bless you, Ma'am! Divil resave the family in all Europe"——

"Good morning, Connell—good morning!—Pray remember what we said."

Peter, however, could not relinquish the whiskey. His sons, daughters, friends, and neighbours, all assailed him, but with no success. He either bantered them in his usual way, or reverted to his loss, and sank into sorrow. This last was the condition in which they found him most intractable; for a man is never considered to be in a state that admits of reasoning or argument, when he is known to be pressed by strong gushes of personal feeling. A plan at length struck Father Mulcahy, which he resolved to put into immediate execution.

"Peter," said he, "if you do not abandon drink, I shall stop the masses which I'm offering up for the repose of your wife's soul, and I will also return you the money I received for saying them."

This was perhaps the only point on which Peter was accessible. He felt staggered at such an unexpected intimation, and was for some time silent.

"You will then feel," added the priest, "that your drunkenness is prolonging the sufferings of your wife, and that *she* is as much concerned in your being sober, as you are yourself."

"I *will* give in," replied Peter; "I didn't see the thing in that light. No—I will not be dhrunk; but if I swear aginst it, you must allow me a rasonable share every day, an' I'll not go beyant it, of coorse. The thruth is, I'd die soon if I gev it up altogether."

"We have certainly no objection against that," said the priest, "provided you keep within what would not injure your health, or make you tipsy. Your drunkenness is not only sinful but disreputable; besides, you must not throw a slur upon the character of your children, who hold respectable and rising situations in the world."

"No," said Peter, in a kind of soliloquy, "I'd lay down my life, avourneen, sooner nor I'd cause you a minute's sufferin'. Father Mulcahy, go an wid the masses. I'll get an oath drawn up, an' whin it's done, I'll swear to it. I know a man that'll do it for me."

The priest then departed, quite satisfied with having accomplished his object; and Peter, in the course of that evening, directed his steps to the house of the village schoolmaster, for the purpose of getting him to "draw up" the intended oath.

"Misther O'Flaherty," said he, "I'm comin' to ax a requist of you, an' I hope you'll grant it to me. I

brought down a sup in this flask, an' while we're takin' it, we can talk over what I want."

"If it be any thing widin the circumference of my power, set it down, Misther Connell, as already operated upon. I'd drop a pen to no man at keepin' Books by Double Enthry, which is the Italian method invinted by Pope Gregory the Great. The Three Sets bear a theological ratio to the three states of a thrue Christian. 'The Waste-book,' says Pope Gregory, 'is this world, the Journal is purgatory, an' the Ledger is heaven. Or it may be compared,' he says, in the priface of the work, 'to the three states of the Catholic church—the church Militant, the church Suffering, and the church Triumphant.' The larnin' of that man was beyant the reach of credibility."

"Arra, have you a small glass, Masther? You see, Misther O'Flaherty, it's consarnin' purgatory, this that I want to talk about."

"Nancy, get us a glass—oh, here it is! Thin if it be, it's a wrong enthry in the Journal."

"Here's your health, Masther!—Not forgettin' you, Mrs. O'Flaherty. No, indeed, thin it's not in the Journal, but an oath I'm goin' to take aginst liquor."

"Nothin' is asier to post than it is. We must enter it undher the head of—let me see!—it must go in the *spirit* account, undher the head of Profit an' Loss. Your good health, Mr. Connell!—Nancy, I dhrink to your improvement in imperturbability! Yes, it must be enthered undher the"——

"Faix, undher *the rose*, I think," observed Peter:

" dont' you know the smack of it? You see since I tuck to it, I like the smell o' what I used to squeeze out o' the barley myself, long ago. Misther O'Flaherty, I only want you to dhraw up an oath aginst liquor for me; but it's not for the books, good or bad. I promised to Father Mulcahy, that I'd do it. It's regardin' my poor Ellish's sowl in purgatory."

" Nancy, hand me a slate an' cutter. Faith, the same's a provident resolution; but how is it an' purgatory concatenated?"

" The priest, you see, won't go an wid the masses for her till I take the oath."

" That's but wake logic, if you ped him for thim."

" Faix, an' I did—an' well, too;—but about the oath? Have you the pencil?"

" I have; jist lave the thing to me."

" Asy, Masther—you don't undherstand it yit. Put down two tumblers for me at home."

" How is that, Misther Connell?—It's mysterious, if you're about to swear *aginst* liquor!"

" I am. Put down, as I said, two tumblers for me at home.—Are they down?"

" They are down; but"———

" Asy!—very good! Put down two more for me at Dan's. Let me see!—two more behind the garden. Well!—put down one at Father Mulcahy's;—two more at Frank Carroll's, of Kilclay. How many's that?"

" Nine!!!"

" Very good. Now put down one wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Nurchasy; an' two over wid Michael Morris, of Cargah. How many have you now?"

"Twelve in all!!!! But, Misther Connell, there's a demonstration badly wanted here: I must confiss I was always bright, but at present I'm as dark as Nox. I'd thank you for a taste of explanation."

"Asy, man alive! Is there twelve in all?"

"Twelve in all: I've calculated them.'

"Well, we'll hould to that. Och, och!—I'm sure, avourneen, afore I'd let you suffer one minute's pain, I'd not scruple to take an oath aginst liquor, any way. He may go an wid the masses now for you, as soon as he likes! Mr. O'Flaherty, will you put that down on paper, an' I'll swear to it, wid a blessin', to-morrow."

"But what object do you wish to effectuate by this?"

"You see, Masther, I dhrink one day wid another from a score to two dozen tumblers, an' I want to swear to no more nor twelve in the twenty-four hours."

"Why there's intelligibility in *that!*—Wid great pleasure, Mr. Connell, I'll indite it. Katty, tare me a lafe out o' Brian Murphy's copy there."

"You see, Masther, it's for Ellish's sake I'm doin' this. State that in the oath."

"I know it; an' well she desarved that specimen of abstinence from you, Misther Connell. Thank you!—your health agin! an' God grant you grace an' fortiiude to go through wid the same oath!—An' so he will, or I'm grievously mistaken in you."

"OATH AGAINST LIQUOR,

made by me, Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath, on behalf of Misther Pether O'Connell, of the Cross-roads, Merchant, on one

part—and of the soul of Mrs. Ellish O'Connell, now in purgatory, Mechanicsess, on the other.

"I solemnly, and meritoriously, and soberly swear, that a single tumbler of whiskey punch shall not cross my lips during the twenty-four hours of the day, barring *twelve*, the locality of which is as followeth:

"Imprimis—Two tumblers at home	2
Secundo—Two more ditto at my son Dan's	2
Tertio—Two more ditto behind my own garden	2
Quarto—One ditto at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's	1
Quinto—Two more ditto at Frank Carroll's of Kilclay	2
Sexto—One ditto wid ould Bardle Gorman, of Nunchasy	1
Septimo—Two more ditto wid Michael Morris, of Carguh	2
	12

N. B.—I except in case any Doctiher of Physic might think it right and medical to ordher me *more* for my health: or in case I could get Father Mulcahy to take the oath off me for a start, at a wedding, or a christening, or at any other meeting of friends where there's drink.

his
Witness present, Pether X O'Connell.
Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath. mark.

June the 4th, 18—.

"☞ I certify that I have made and calculated this oath for Misther Pether O'Connell, Merchant, and that it is strictly and arithmetically proper and correct.

"Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath.

"*Dated this 4th day of June*, 18—."

"I think, Misther O'Flaherty, it's a dacent oath, as it stands. Plase God I'll swear to it some time to-morrow *evenin'*."

"Dacent! Why I don't wish to become eulogistically addicted; but I'd back the same oath, for

both grammar and arithmetic, aginst any that ever was drawn up by a lawyer—ay, by Counsellor O'Connell himself!—but faith, I'd not face him at a Vow, for all that; he's the greatest man at a Vow in the three kingdoms."

"I'll tell you what I'm thinkin', Masther—as my hand's in, mightn't I as well take another wid an ould frind o' mine, Andy Cavanagh, of Lisbuy? He's a dacent ould residenther, an' likes it. It'll make the baker's, or the long dozen."

"Why, it's not a bad thought; but won't thirteen get into your head?"

"No, nor three more to the back o' that. I only begin to get hearty about seventeen; so that the long dozen, afther all, is best; for God he knows, I've a regard for Andy Cavanagh this many a year, an' I wouldn't wish to lave him out."

"Very well—I'll add it up to the other part of the oath.

Octavo—One ditto out of respect for dacent Andy Cavanagh of Lisbuy 1

Now I must make the total amount thirteen, an' all will be right."

"Masther, have you a prayer-book widin?—bekase if you have, I may as well swear it here, an' you can witness it."

"Katty, hand over the *Spiritual* Exercises—a book aquil to the Bible itself for piety an' devotion."

"Sure they say, Masther, any book that the name o' God's in, is good for an oath. Now, wid the help

o' goodness, repate the words afore me, an' I'll sware thim."

O'Flaherty hemmed two or three times, and complied with Peter's wishes, who followed him in the words until the oath was concluded. He then kissed the book, and expressed himself much at ease, as well, he said, upon the account of Ellish's soul, as for the sake of his children.

For some time after this, his oath was the standing jest of the neighbourhood: even to this day, Peter Connell's oath against liquor is a proverb in that part of the country. Immediately after he had sworn, no one could ever perceive that he violated it in the slightest degree; but there could be no doubt as to his literally fulfilling it. A day never passed in which he did not punctually pay a friendly visit to those whose names were dotted down, with whom he sat, pulled out his flask, and drank his quantum. In the mean time the poor man was breaking down rapidly; so much so, that his appearance generally excited pity, if not sorrow, among his neighbours. His character became simpler every day, and his intellect evidently more exhausted. The inoffensive humour, for which he had been noted, was also completely on the wane; his eye was dim, his step feeble, but the benevolence of his heart never failed him. Many acts of his private generosity are well known, and still remembered with gratitude.

In proportion as the strength of his mind and constitution diminished, so did his capacity for bearing liquor. When he first bound himself by the oath not to exceed the long dozen, such was his vigour,

that the effects of thirteen tumblers could scarcely be perceived on him. This state of health, however, did not last. As he wore away, the influence of so much liquor was becoming stronger, until at length he found that it was more than he could bear, that he frequently confounded the names of the men, and the number of tumblers mentioned in the oath, and sometimes took, in his route, persons and places not to be found in it at all. This grieved him, and he resolved to wait upon O'Flaherty, for the purpose of having some means devised of guiding him during his potations.

"Masther," said he, "we must thry an' make this oath somethin' plainer. You see, whin I get confused, I'm not able to remimber things as I ought. Sometimes, instid o' one tumbler, I take two at the wrong place; an' sarra bit o' me but called in an' had three wid ould Jack Rogers, that isn't in it at all. On another day I had a couple wid honest Barny Casey, an my way acrass to Bartle Gorman's. I'm not what I was, Masther, ahagur; so I'd thank you to dhraw it out more clearer, if you can, nor it was."

"I see, Mr. Connell; I comprehend wid the greatest ase in life, the very plan for it. We must reduce the oath to Geography, for I'm at home there, bein' a Surveyor myself. I'll lay down a map o' the parish, an' draw the houses of your friends at their proper places, so that you'll never be out o' your latitude at all."

"Faix, I doubt *that*, Masther! — ha, ha, ha!" replied Peter; "I'm afeard I will, of an odd time, for

I'm not able to carry what I used to do; but no matther: thry what you can do for me this time, any how. I think I could bear the long dozen still, if I didn't make mistakes."

O'Flaherty accordingly set himself to work; and as his knowledge, not only of the parish, but of every person and house in it, was accurate, he soon had a tolerably correct skeleton map of it drawn for Peter's use.

"Now," said he, "lend me your ears."

"Faix, I'll do no sich thing," replied Peter—"I know a thrick worth two of it. Lend you my ears, inagh!—catch me at it! You have a bigger pair of your own nor I have—ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, in other words, pay attintion. Now, see this dot—that's your own house."

"Put a crass there," said Peter, "an thin I'll know it's the Crass-roads."

"Upon my reputation, you're right; an' that's what I call a good specimen of ingenuity. I'll take the hint from that, an' we'll make it a Hieroglyphical as well as a Geographical oath. Well, there's a crass, wid two tumblers. Is that clear?"

"It is, it is! Go an."

"Now here we draw a line to your son Dan's. Let me see; he keeps a mill, an' sells cloth. Very good. I'll dhraw a mill-wheel an' a yard-wand. There's two tumblers. Will you know that?"

"I see it: go an', nothin' can be clearer. So far I can't go asthray."

"Well, what next? Two behind your own garden.

What metaphor for the garden? Let me see!—let me cogitate! A dragon — the Hesperides! That's beyant *you*. A bit of a hedge will do, an' a gate."

"Don't put a gate in, it's not lucky. You know when a man takes to dhrink, they say he's goin' a grey gate, or a black gate, or a bad gate. Put that out, an' make the hedge longer, an' it'll do—wid the two tumblers, though."

"They're down. One at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's. How will we thranslate the priest?"

"Faix, I doubt that will be a difficquilt business."

"Upon my reputation, I agree wid you in that, espicially whin he repates Latin. However, we'll see. He writes P. P. afther his name;—pee-pee is what we call the turkeys wid. What 'ud you think o' two turkeys?"

"The priest would like them roasted, but I couldn't undherstand that. No; put down the sign o the horsewhip, or the cudgel; for he's handy, an argues well wid both?"

"Good! I'll put down the horsewhip first, an' the cudgel along side of it; then the tumbler, an' there 'ill be the sign o' the priest."

"Ay do, Masther, an' faix the priest 'ill be complate—there can be no mistakin' him thin. Divil a one but that's a good thought!"

"There, it is in black an' white. Who comes next? Frank Carroll. He's a farmer. I'll put down a spade an' a harrow. Well, that's done—two tumblers."

"I won't mistake that aither. It's clear enough."

"Bartle Gorman's of Nurchasey. Bartle's a little lame, an' uses a staff wid a cross on the end that he houlds in his hand. I'll put down a staff wid a cross on it."

"Would there be no danger of me mistakin' that for the priest's cudgel?"

"Not the slightest. I'll pledge my knowledge of geography, they're two very different weapons."

"Well, put it down—I'll know it"

"Michael Morris of Cargah. What for him? Michael's a pig-driver. I'll put down a pig. You'll comprehend that?"

"I ought; for many a pig I sould him in my day. Put down the pig; an' if you could put two black spots upon his back, I'd know it to be one I sould him about four years agone—the fattest ever was in the country—it had to be brought home on a car, for it wasn't able to walk wid fat."

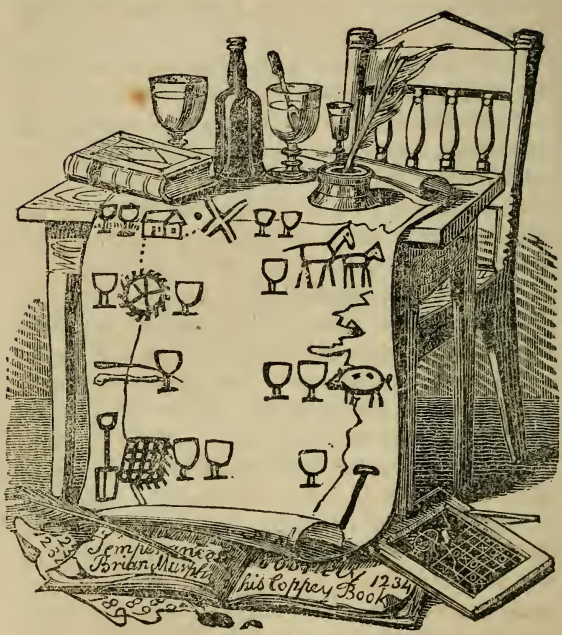
"Very good; the spots are on it. The last is Andy Cavanagh of Lisbuy. Now, do you see that I've drawn a line from place to place, so that you have nothing to do only to keep to it as you go. What for Andy?"

Andy! Let me see—Andy! Pooh! What's come over me that I've nothing for Andy? Ay! I have it. He's a horse-jockey: put down a grey mare I sould him about five years agone."

"I'll put down a horse; but I can't make a grey mare wid black ink."

"Well, make a mare of her, any way."

" Faith, an' that same puzzles me. Stop, I have it; I'll put a foal along wid her."



" As good as the bank. God bless you, Misther O'Flaherty. I think this'll keep me from mistakes. An' now, if you'll slip up to me afther dusk, I'll send you down a couple of bottles and a flitch. Sure you desarve more for the throuble you tuck."

Many of our readers, particularly of our English

readers, will be somewhat startled to hear, that except the change of names and places, there is actually little exaggeration in the form of this oath; so just is the observation, that the romance of truth frequently far exceeds that of fiction.

Peter had, however, over-rated his own strength in supposing that he could bear the long dozen in future; ere many months passed, he was scarcely able to reach the half of that number without sinking into intoxication. Whilst in this state, he was in the habit of going to the grave-yard in which his wife lay buried, where he sat, and wept like a child, sang her favourite songs, or knelt and offered up his prayers for the repose of her soul. None ever mocked him for this; on the contrary, there was always some kind person to assist him home. And as he staggered on, instead of sneers and ridicule, one might hear such expressions as these:—

"Poor Pether! he's nearly off; an' a dacent, kind neighbour he ever was. The death of the wife broke his heart—he never ris his head since."

"Ay poor man! God pity him! He'll soon be sleepin' beside her, beyant there, where she's lyin'. It was never known of Pether Connell that he offinded man, woman, or child, since he was born, barrin' the gaugers, bad luck to thim, afore he was marrid—but *that* was no offince. Sowl, he was *their* match, any how. When he an' the wife's gone, they won't lave their likes behind them. The sons are *bodaghs*—gintlemen, now; an' it's nothin' but dinners an' company. Ahagur, that wasn't the way their hard-workin' father an' mother made the money that

they're houldin' their heads up wid such consequence upon."

The children, however, did not give Peter up as hopeless. Father Mulcahy, too, once more assailed him on his weak side. One morning, when he was sober, nervous, and depressed, the priest arrived, and finding him at home, addressed him as follows:

"Peter, I'm sorry, and vexed, and angry, this morning; and you are the cause of it."

"How is that, your Reverence?" said Peter. "God help me," he added, "don't be hard an me, Sir, for I'm to be pitied. Don't be hard on me, for the short time I'll be here. I know it won't be long —I'll be wid *her* soon. Asthore machree, we'll be together, I hope, afore long—an', oh! if it was the will o' God, I would be glad it was afore night!"

The poor, shattered, heart-broken creature, wept bitterly; for he felt somewhat sensible of the justice of the reproof which he expected from the priest, as well as undiminished sorrow for his wife.

"I'm not going to be hard on you," said the good-natured priest; "I only called to tell you a dream that your son Dan had last night about you and his mother."

"About Ellish! Oh, for heaven's sake, what about her, Father, avourneen?"

"She appeared to him, last night," replied Father Mulcahy, "and told him that your drinking kept her out of happiness."

"Queen of heaven!" exclaimed Peter, deeply affected, "is that true? Oh," said he, dropping on his knees, "Father, ahagur machree, pardon me—

oh, forgive me! I now promise, solemnly and seriously, to drink neither *in* the house nor *out* of it, for the time to come, not one drop at all, good, bad, or indifferent, of either whiskey, wine, or punch — barrin' one glass. Are you now satisfied? an' do you think she'll get to happiness?"

"All will be well, I trust," said the priest. "I shall mention this to Dan and the rest, and depend upon it, they, too, will be happy to hear it."

"Here's what Mr. O'Flaherty an' myself made up," said Peter: "burn it, Father; take it out of my sight, for it's now no use to me."

"What is this at all?" said Mr. Mulcahy, looking into it. "Is it an oath?"

"It's the Joggraphy of one I swore sometime ago; but it's now out of date—I'm done wid it."

The priest could not avoid smiling when he perused it, and on getting from Peter's lips an explanation of the Hieroglyphics, he laughed heartily at the ingenious shifts they had made to guide his memory.

Peter, for some time after this, confined himself to one glass, as he had promised; but he felt such depression and feebleness, that he ventured slowly, and by degrees, to *enlarge* the "glass" from which he drank. His impression touching the happiness of his wife was, that as he had for several months strictly observed his promise, she had probably during that period gone to heaven. He then began to exercise his ingenuity gradually, as we have said, by using, from time to time, a glass larger than the preceding one; thus receding from the spirit of his vow to the letter, and increasing the quantity of his drink

from a small glass to the most capacious tumbler he could find. The manner in which he drank this was highly illustrative of the customs which prevail on this subject in Ireland. He remembered, that in making the vow, he used the words, " neither *in* the house nor *out* of it;" but in order to get over this dilemma, he usually stood with one foot outside the threshold, and the other in the house, keeping himself in that position which would render it difficult to determine whether he was either out or in. At other times, when he happened to be up stairs, he usually thrust one half of his person out of the window, with the same ludicrous intention of keeping the letter of his vow.

Many a smile this adroitness of his occasioned to the lookers-on; but further ridicule was checked by his wo-begone and afflicted look. He was now a mere skeleton, feeble and tottering.

One night in the depth of winter he went into the town where his two sons resided; he had been ill in mind and body during the day, and he fancied that change of scene and society might benefit him. His daughter and son-in-law, in consequence of his illness, watched him so closely, that he could not succeed in getting his usual " glass." This offended him, and he escaped without their knowledge to the son who kept the Inn. On arriving there, he went up stairs, and by a *douceur* to the waiter, got a large tumbler filled with spirits. The lingering influences of a conscience that generally felt strongly on the side of moral duty, though poorly instructed, prompted him to drink it in the usual manner, by keeping one-half

of his body, as nearly as he could guess, out of the window, that it might be said he drank it neither in nor out of the house. He had scarcely finished his draught, however, when he lost his balance, and was precipitated upon the pavement. The crash of his fall was heard in the bar, and his son, who had just come in, ran, along with several others, to ascertain what had happened. They found him, however, only severely stunned. He was immediately brought in, and medical aid sent for; but, though he recovered from the immediate effects of the fall, the shock it gave to his broken constitution, and his excessive grief, carried him off in a few months afterwards. He expired in the arms of his son and daughter, and amidst the tears of those who knew his simplicity of character, his goodness of heart, and his attachment to the wife by whose death that heart had been broken.

Such was the melancholy end of the honest and warm-hearted Peter Connell, who, unhappily, was not a solitary instance of a man driven to habits of intoxication and neglect of business, by the force of sorrow, which time and a well-regulated mind might otherwise have overcome. We have held him up, on the one hand, as an example worthy of imitation in that industry and steadiness which, under the direction of his wife, raised him from poverty to independence and wealth; and, on the other, as a man resorting to the use of spirituous liquors that he might be enabled to support affliction—a course which, so far from having sustained him under it, shattered his

constitution, shortened his life, and destroyed his happiness. In conclusion, we wish our countrymen of Peter's class would imitate him in his better qualities, and try to avoid his failings.

AN ESSAY ON IRISH SWEARING.

AN ESSAY ON IRISH SWEARING.

No pen can do justice to the extravagance and frolic inseparable from the character of the Irish people; nor has any system of philosophy been discovered that can with moral fitness be applied to them. Phrenology fails to explain it, for according to the most capital surveys hitherto made and reported on, it appears that, inasmuch as the moral and intellectual organs of Irishmen predominate over the physical and sensual, the people ought therefore to be ranked at the very tip top of morality. We would warn the phrenologists, however, not to be too sanguine in drawing inferences from an examination of Paddy's head. Heaven only knows the scenes in which it is engaged, and the protuberances created by a long life of hard fighting. Many an organ and developement is brought out on it by the cudgel that never would have appeared had nature been left to herself.

Drinking, fighting, and swearing, are the three great characteristics of every people. Paddy's love of fighting and of whiskey has been long proverbial; and

of his tact in swearing much has also been said. But there is one department of oath-making in which he stands unrivalled and unapproachable; I mean the *alibi*. There is where he shines, where his oath, instead of being a mere matter of fact or opinion, rises up into the dignity of epic narrative, containing within itself all the complexity of machinery, harmony of parts, and fertility of invention, by which your true epic should be characterised.

The Englishman, whom we will call the historian in swearing, will depose to the truth of this or that fact, but there the line is drawn: he swears his oath so far as he knows, and stands still. "I'm sure, for my part, I don't know; I've said all I knows about it," and beyond this his besotted intellect goeth not.

The Scotchman, on the other hand, who is the metaphysician in swearing, sometimes borders on equivocation. He decidedly goes further than the Englishman, not because he has less honesty, but more prudence. He will assent to, or deny a proposition; for the Englishman's "I don't know," and the Scotchman's "I dinna ken," are two very distinct assertions when properly understood. The former stands out a monument of dulness, an insuperable barrier against inquiry, ingenuity, and fancy; but the latter frequently stretches itself so as to embrace hypothetically a particular opinion.

But Paddy!—Put *him* forward to prove an alibi for his fourteenth or fifteenth cousin, and you will be gratified by the pomp, pride, and circumstance of true swearing. Every oath with him *is* an epic—pure poetry, abounding with humour, pathos, and the

highest order of invention and talent. He is not at ease, it is true, under *facts;* there is something too common-place in dealing with them, which his genius scorns. But his flights—his flights are beautiful; and his episodes admirable and happy. In fact, he is an *improvisatore* at oath-taking; with this difference, that his *extempore* oaths possess all the ease and correctness of labour and design.

He is not, however, *altogether* averse to facts; but like your true poet, he veils, changes, and modifies them with such skill, that they possess all the merit and graces of fiction. If he happen to make an assertion incompatible with the plan of the piece, his genius acquires fresh energy, enables him to widen the design, and to create new machinery, with such happiness of adaptation, that what appeared out of proportion or character, is made in his hands to contribute to the general strength and beauty of the oath.

'Tis true, there is nothing perfect under the sun; but if there were, it would certainly be Paddy at an *alibi*. Some flaws, no doubt, occur; some slight inaccuracies may be noticed by a critical eye; an occasional anachronism stands out, and a mistake or so in geography; but let it be recollected that Paddy's *alibi* is but a human production; let us not judge him by harsher rules than those which we apply to Homer, Virgil, or Shakspeare.

"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus," is allowed on all hands. Virgil made Dido and Æneas contemporary, though they were not so; and Shakspeare, by the creative power of his genius, changed an inland

town into a sea-port. Come, come, have bowels. Let epic swearing be treated with the same courtesy shown to epic poetry, that is, if both are the production of a rare genius. I maintain, that when Paddy commits a blemish he is too harshly admonished for it. When he soars out of sight here, as occasionally happens, does he not frequently alight somewhere about Sidney Bay, much against his own inclination? And if he puts forth a hasty production, is he not compelled for the space of seven or fourteen years to revise his oath? But, indeed, few works of fiction are properly encouraged in Ireland.

It would be unpardonable in us, however, to overlook the beneficial effects of Paddy's peculiar genius in swearing *alibis*. Some persons, who display their own egregious ignorance of morality, may be disposed to think that it tends to lessen the obligation of an oath, by inducing a habit among the people of swearing to what is not true. We look upon such persons as very dangerous to Ireland and to the repeal of the Union; and we request them not to push their principles too far in the disturbed parts of the country. Could society hold together a single day, if nothing but truth were *spoken?* Would not law and lawyers soon become obsolete, if nothing but truth were *sworn?* What would become of parliament if truth alone were uttered there? Its annual proceedings might be dispatched in a month. Fiction is the basis of society, the bond of commercial prosperity, the channel of communication between nation and nation, and not unfrequently the interpreter between a man and his own conscience.

For these, and many other reasons which we could adduce, we say with Paddy, 'long life to fiction!' When associated with swearing, it shines in its brightest colours. What, for instance, is calculated to produce the best and purest of the moral virtues so beautifully, as the swearing an *alibi?* Here are fortitude and a love of freedom resisting oppression; for it is well known that all law is oppression in Ireland.

There is compassion for the peculiar state of the poor boy, who, perhaps, *only* burned a family in their beds; benevolence to prompt the generous effort in his behalf; disinterestedness to run the risk of becoming an involuntary absentee; fortitude in encountering a host of brazen-faced lawyers; patience under the unsparing gripe of a cross-examiner; perseverance in conducting the oath to its close against a host of difficulties; and friendship, which bottoms and crowns them all.

Paddy's merits, however, touching the alibi, rest not here. Fiction on these occasions only teaches him how to perform a *duty.* It may be, that he is under the obligation of a previous oath *not* to give evidence *against* certain of his friends and associates. Now could any thing in the whole circle of religion or ethics be conceived that renders the epic style of swearing so incumbent upon Paddy? There is a kind of moral fitness in all things; for where the necessity of invention exists, it is consolatory to reflect that the ability to invent is bestowed along with it.

Next to the alibi come Paddy's powers in sustaining a cross-examination. Many persons think that this is his *forte;* but we cannot yield to such an

opinion, nor compromise his originality of conception in the scope and plan of an alibi. It is marked by a minuteness of touch, and a peculiarity of expression which give it every appearance of real life. The circumstances are so well imagined, the groups so naturally disposed, the colouring so finished, and the background in such fine perspective, that the whole picture presents you with such keeping and *vraisemblance*, as could be accomplished only by the genius of a master.

In point of interest, however, we must admit, that his ability in a cross-examination ranks next to his skill in *planning* an alibi. There is, in the former, a versatility of talent that keeps him always ready; a happiness of retort, generally disastrous to the wit or the most established cross-examiner; an apparent simplicity, which is quite as impenetrable as the lawyer's assurance; a *vis comica*, which puts the court in tears; and an originality of sorrow, that often convulses it with laughter. His resources, when he is pressed, are inexhaustible; and the address with which he contrives to gain time, that he may suit his reply to the object of his evidence, is beyond all praise. And yet his appearance when he mounts the table is anything but prepossessing; a sheepish look, and a loose-jointed frame of body, wrapped in a frieze great-coat, do not promise much. Nay, there is often a rueful blank expression in his visage, which might lead a stranger to anticipate nothing but blunders and dulness. This, however, is hypocrisy of the first water. Just observe the tact with which he places his caubeen upon the table, his kippeen across it, and the ex-

perienced air with which he pulls up the waistbands of his breeches, absolutely girding his loins for battle. 'Tis true his blue eye has at present nothing remarkable in it, except a drop or two of the native; but that is *not* remarkable.

When the direct examination has been concluded, nothing can be finer than the simplicity with which he turns round to the lawyer, who is to cross-examine him. Yet, as if conscious that firmness and caution are his main guards, he again pulls up his waistbands with a more vigorous hitch, looks shyly into the very eyes of his opponent, and awaits the first blow.

The question at length comes; and Paddy, after having raised the collar of his big coat on his shoulder, and twisted up the shoulder along with it, directly puts the query back to the lawyer, without altering a syllable of it, for the purpose of ascertaining more accurately whether that is the precise question that has been put to him; for Paddy is conscientious. Then is the science displayed on both sides. The one, a veteran, trained in all the technicalities of legal puzzles, irony, blarney, sarcasm, impudence, stock jokes, quirks, rigmarolery, brow-beating, ridicule, and subtilty; the other a poor peasant, relying only upon the justice of a good cause and the gifts of nature; without either experience or learning, and with nothing but his native modesty to meet the forensic effrontery of his antagonist.

Our readers will perceive that the odds are a thousand to one against Paddy; yet, when he replies to a hackneyed genius at cross-examination, how does it happen that he uniformly elicits those roars of laugh-

ter which rise in the court, and convulse it from the judge to the crier? In this laugh, which is usually at the expense of the cross-examiner, Paddy himself always joins, so that the counsel has the double satisfaction of being made not only the jest of the judge and his brother lawyers, but of the ragged witness whom he attempted to make ridiculous.

It is not impossible that this merry mode of dispensing justice may somewhat encourage Paddy in that independence of mind which relishes not the idea of being altogether bound by oaths that are too often administered with a jocular spirit. To many of the uninitiated Irish an oath is a solemn, to some, an awful thing. Of this wholesome reverence for its sanction, two or three testimonies given in a court of justice usually cure them. The indifferent, business-like manner in which the oaths are put, the sing-song tone of voice, the rapid utterance of the words, give to this solemn act an appearance of excellent burlesque, which ultimately renders the whole proceedings remarkable for the absence of truth and reality; but, at the same time, gives them unquestionable merit as a dramatic representation, abounding with fiction, well related, and ably acted.

Thumb-kissing is another feature in Paddy's adroitness too important to be passed over in silence. Here his tact shines out again! It would be impossible for him in many cases to meet the perplexities of a cross-examination so cleverly as he does, if he did not believe that he had, by kissing his thumb instead of the book, actually taken no oath, and consequently given to himself a wider range of action. We must

admit, however, that this very circumstance involves him in difficulties which are sometimes peculiarly embarrassing. Taking every thing into consideration, the prospect of freedom for his sixth cousin, the consciousness of having kissed his thumb, or the consoling reflection that he swore only on a *Law* Bible, it must be granted, that the opportunities presented by a cross-examination are well calculated to display his wit, humour, and fertility of invention. He is accordingly great in it; but still we maintain, that his execution of an *alibi* is his ablest performance, comprising, as it does, both the conception and construction of the work.

Both the oaths and imprecations of the Irish display, like those who use them, indications of great cruelty and great humour. Many of the former exhibit that ingenuity which comes out when Paddy is on his cross-examination in a court of justice. Every people, it is true, have resorted to the habit of mutilating or changing in their oaths the letters which form the Creator's name; but we question if any have surpassed the Irish in the cleverness with which they accomplish it. Mock oaths are habitual to Irishmen in ordinary conversation; but the use of any or all of them is not considered to constitute an oath: on the contrary, they are in the mouths of many who would not, except upon a very solemn occasion indeed, swear by the name of the Deity in its proper form.

The ingenuity of their mock oaths is sufficient to occasion much perplexity to any one disposed to consider it in connexion with the character and moral feelings of the people. Whether to note it as a reluc-

tance on their part to incur the guilt of an oath, or as a proof of habitual tact in evading it by artifice, is manifestly a difficulty hard to be overcome. We are decidedly inclined to the former; for although there is much laxity of principle among Irishmen, naturally to be expected from men whose moral state has been neglected by the legislature, and deteriorated by political and religious asperity, acting upon quick passions and badly regulated minds—yet we know that they possess, after all, a strong, but vague undirected sense of devotional feeling and reverence, which are associated with great crimes, and awfully dark shades of character. This explains one chief cause of the sympathy which is felt in Ireland for criminals, from whom the law exacts the fatal penalty of death; and it also accounts, independently of the existence of any illegal association, for the terrible retribution inflicted upon those who come forward to prosecute them. It is not in Ireland with criminals as in other countries, where the character of a murderer or incendiary is notoriously bad, as resulting from a life of gradual profligacy and villany. Far from it. In Ireland you will find those crimes perpetrated by men who are good fathers, good husbands, good sons, and good neighbours—by men who would share their last morsel or their last shilling with a fellow-creature in distress—who would generously lose their lives for a man who had obliged them, provided he had not incurred their enmity—and who would protect a defenceless stranger as far as lay in their power.

There are some mock oaths among Irishmen which must have had their origin amongst those whose

habits of thought were much more elevated than could be supposed to characterise the lower orders. "By the powers of death" is never now used as we have written it; but the ludicrous travestie of it, "by the powdhers o' delf," is quite common. Of this and other mock oaths it may be right to observe, that those who swear by them are in general ignorant of their proper origin. There are some, however, of this description whose original form is well known. One of these Paddy displays considerable ingenuity in using. "By the cross" can scarcely be classed under the mock oaths; but the manner in which it is pressed into asseverations is amusing. When Paddy is affirming a truth he swears "by the crass" simply, and this with him is an oath of considerable obligation. He generally, in order to render it more impressive, accompanies it with suitable action, that is, he places the forefinger of each hand across, that he may assail you through two senses instead of one. On the contrary, when he intends to hoax you by asserting what is not true, he ingeniously multiplies the oath, and swears "by the five crasses," that is by his own five fingers, placing at the same time his four fingers and his thumbs across each other in a most impressive and vehement manner. Don't believe him then—the knave is lying as fast as possible, and with no remorse. "By the crass o' Christ" is an oath of much solemnity, and seldom used in a falsehood. Paddy also often places two bits of straws across, and sometimes two sticks, upon which he swears with an appearance of great heat and sincerity—*sed caveto.*

Irishmen generally consider iron as a sacred metal.

In the interior of the country, the thieves (but few in number) are frequently averse to stealing it. Why it possesses this hold upon their affections, it is difficult to say, but it is certain that they rank it among their sacred things; consider that to find it is lucky, and nail it over their doors when found in the convenient shape of a horse-shoe. It is also used as a medium of asserting truth. We believe, however, that the sanction it imposes is not very strong. "By this blessed iron!"—"by this blessed an' holy iron!" are oaths of an inferior grade; but if the circumstance on which they are founded be a matter of indifference, they seldom depart from truth in using them.

We have said in our First Series of these "Traits and Stories," that Paddy, when engaged in a fight, is never at a loss for a weapon, and we may also affirm, that he is never at a loss for an oath. When relating a narrative, or some other circumstance of his own invention, if contradicted, he will corroborate it, in order to sustain his credit or produce the proper impression, by an abrupt oath upon the first object he can seize. "Arrah, nonsense! by this pipe in my hand, it's as thrue as"—and then, before he completes the illustration, he goes on with a fine specimen of equivocation—"by the stool I'm sittin' an, *it is;* an' what more would you have from me barrin' I take my book oath of it?" Thus does he, under the mask of an insinuation, induce you to believe that he has actually sworn it, whereas the oath is always left undefined and incomplete.

Sometimes he is exceedingly comprehensive in his adjurations, and swears upon a magnificent scale; as,

for instance,—" By the contints of all the books that ever wor opened an' shut, it's as thrue as the sun to the dial." This certainly leaves " the five crasses" immeasurably behind. However, be cautious, and not too confident in taking so sweeping and learned an oath upon trust, notwithstanding its imposing effect. We grant, indeed, that an oath which comprehends within its scope all the learned libraries of Europe, including even the Alexandrian of old, is not only an erudite one, but establishes in a high degree the taste of the swearer, and displays on his part an uncommon grasp of intellect. Still we recommend you, whenever you hear an alleged fact substantiated by it, to set your ear as sharply as possible; for, after all, it is more than probable that every book by which he has sworn might be contained in a nutshell. The secret may be briefly explained:—Paddy is in the habit of substituting the word *n*ever for ever. " By all the books that *n*ever wor opened or shut," the reader perceives, is only a flourish of trumpets—a mere delusion of the enemy.

In fact, Paddy has oaths rising gradually from the lying ludicrous, to the superstitious solemn, each of which finely illustrates the nature of the subject to which it is applied. When he swears " By the contints o' Moll Kelly's Primer," or " By the piper that played afore Moses," you are, perhaps as strongly inclined to believe him as when he draws upon a more serious oath; that is, you almost regret the thing is not the gospel that Paddy asserts it to be. In the former sense, the humorous narrative which calls forth the laughable burlesque of " By the piper o'

Moses," is usually the richest lie in the whole range of fiction.

Paddy is, in his ejaculatory, as well as in all his other mock oaths, a kind of smuggler in morality, imposing as often as he can upon his own conscience, and upon those who exercise spiritual authority over him. Perhaps more of his oaths are blood-stained than would be found among the inhabitants of all Christendom put together.

Paddy's oaths in his amours are generally rich specimens of humorous knavery and cunning. It occasionally happens—but for the honour of our virtuous countrywomen, we say but rarely—that by the honey of his flattering and delusive tongue, he succeeds in placing some unsuspecting girl's reputation in rather a hazardous predicament. When the priest comes to investigate the affair, and to cause him to make compensation to the innocent creature who suffered by his blandishments, it is almost uniformly ascertained that, in order to satisfy her scruples as to the honesty of his promises, he had sworn marriage to her *on a book of ballads!!!* In other cases *blank books* have been used for the same purpose.

If, however, you wish to pin Paddy up in a corner, get him a Relic, a Catholic prayer-book, or a Douay Bible to swear upon. Here is where the fox—notwithstanding all his turnings and windings upon heretic Bibles, books of ballads, or mock oaths—is caught at last. The strongest principle in him is superstition. It may be found as the prime mover in his best and worst actions. An atrocious man, who is superstitious, will perform many good and chari-

table actions, with a hope that their merit in the sight of God may cancel the guilt of his crimes. On the other hand, a good man, who is superstitiously the slave of his religious opinions, will lend himself to those illegal combinations, whose object is, by keeping ready a system of organized opposition to an heretical government, to fulfil, if a political crisis should render it practicable, the absurd prophecies of Pastorini and Columbkil. Although the prophecies of the former would appear to be out of date to a rational reader, yet Paddy, who can see farther into prophecy than any rational reader, honestly believes that Pastorini has left for those who are superstitiously given, sufficient range of expectation in several parts of his work.

We might enumerate many other oaths in frequent use among the peasantry; but as our object is not to detail them at full length, we trust that those already specified may be considered sufficient to enable our readers to get a fuller insight into their character, and their moral influence upon the people.

The next thing which occurs to us in connexion with the present subject, is *cursing;* and here again Paddy holds the first place. His imprecations are often full, bitter, and intense. Indeed, there is more poetry and epigrammatic point in them, than in those of any other country in the world.

We find it a difficult thing to enumerate the Irish curses, so as to do justice to a subject so varied and so liable to be shifted and improved by the fertile genius of those who send them abroad. Indeed to reduce them into order and method would be a task of

considerable difficulty. Every occasion, and every fit of passion, frequently produce a new curse, perhaps equal in bitterness to any that has gone before it.

Many of the Irish imprecations are difficult to be understood, having their origin in some historical event, or in poetical metaphors that require a considerable process of reasoning to explain them. Of this two-fold class is that general one, "the curse of Cromwell on you!" which means, may you suffer all that a tyrant like Cromwell would inflict! and "the curse o' the crows upon you!" which is probably an allusion to the Danish invasion—a raven being the symbol of Denmark; or it may be tantamount to "may you rot on the hills, that the crows may feed upon your carcase!" Perhaps it may thus be understood to imprecate death upon you or some member of your house—alluding to the superstition of rooks hovering over the habitations of the sick, when the malady with which they are afflicted is known to be fatal. Indeed, the latter must certainly be the meaning of it, as is evident from the proverb of "die, an' give the crow a puddin'."

"Hell's cure to you!—the devil's luck to you!—high hanging to you!—hard feeding to you!—a short coorse to you!" are all pretty intense, and generally used under provocation and passion. In these cases the curses just mentioned are directed immediately to the offensive object, and there certainly is no want of the *malus animus* to give them energy. It would be easy to multiply the imprecations belonging to this class among the peasantry, but the task is rather unpleasant. There are a few, however, which in

consequence of their ingenuity we cannot pass over: they are, in sooth, studies for the swearer. "May you never die till you see your own funeral!" is a very beautiful specimen of the periphrasis: it simply means, may you be hanged; for he who is hanged is humorously said to be favoured with a view of that sombre spectacle, by which they mean the crowd that attends an execution. To the same purpose is, "May you die wid a caper in your heel!"—"May you die in your pumps!"—"May your last dance be a hornpipe on the air!" These are all emblematic of hanging, and are uttered sometimes in jest, and occasionally in earnest. "May the grass grow before your door!" is highly imaginative and poetical. Nothing, indeed, can present the mind with a stronger or more picturesque emblem of desolation and ruin. Its malignity is terrible.

There are also mock imprecations, as well as mock oaths. Of this character are, "The devil go with you and sixpence, an' thin you'll want neither money nor company!" This humorous and considerate curse is generally confined to the female sex. When Paddy happens to be in a romping mood, and teases his sweetheart too much, she usually utters it with a countenance combating with smiles and frowns, whilst she stands in the act of pinning up her dishevelled hair; her cheek, particularly the one next Paddy, deepened into a becoming blush.

"Bad scran to you!" is another form seldom used in anger: it is the same as "Hard feeding to you!" "Bad win' to you!" is "Ill health to you!" it is nearly the same as "Consumin' (consumption) to

you!" Two other imprecations come under this head, which we will class together, because they are counterparts of each other, with this difference, that one of them is the most subtilely and intensely withering in its purport that can well be conceived. The one is that common curse, "Bad 'cess to you!" that is, bad success to you: we may identify it with "hard fortune to you!" The other is a keen one, indeed—"*sweet* bad look to you!" Now whether we consider the epithet sweet as bitterly ironical, or deem it as a wish that prosperity may harden the heart to the accomplishment of future damnation, as in the case of Dives, we must in either sense grant that it is an oath of powerful hatred and venom. Occasionally the curse of "bad luck to you!" produces an admirable retort, which is pretty common. When one man applies it to another, he is answered with "*Good* look to you thin; but *may neither of thim ever happen*!"

"Six eggs to you, an' half-a-dozen o' thim rotten!" like "the devil go with you an' sixpence!" is another of those pleasantries which mostly occur in the good-humoured *badinage* between the sexes. It implies disappointment.

There is a species of imprecation prevalent among Irishmen which we may term neutral. It is ended by the word *bit*, and merely results from a habit of swearing where there is no malignity of purpose. An Irishman, when corroborating an assertion, however true or false, will often say, "bad luck to the bit but it is;" —"divil fire the bit but it's thruth!"—"damn the bit but it is!" and so on. In this form the mind is

not moved, nor the passions excited; it is therefore probably the most insipid of all their imprecations.

Some of the most dreadful maledictions are to be heard among the confirmed mendicants of Ireland. The wit, the gall, and the poetry of these are uncommon. "May you melt off the earth like snow off the ditch!" is one of a high order, and intense malignity; but it is not exclusively confined to mendicants, although they form that class among which it is most prevalent. Nearly related to this is, "May you melt like butther before a summer sun!" These are, indeed, essentially poetical: they present the mind with appropriate imagery, and exhibit a comparison perfectly just and striking. The former we think unrivalled.

Some of the Irish imprecations would appear to have come down to us from the Ordeals. Of this class, probably, are the following: "May this be poison to me!"—"May I be roasted on red-hot iron!" Others of them, from their boldness of metaphor, seem to be of Oriental descent. One expression, indeed, is strikingly so. When a deep offence is offered to an Irishman, under such peculiar circumstances that he cannot immediately retaliate, he usually replies to his enemy—"You'll sup sorrow for this!"—"You'll curse the day it happened!"—"I'll make you rub your heels together!" All these figurative denunciations are used for the purpose of intimating the pain and agony he will compel his enemy to suffer.

We cannot omit a form of imprecation for good, which is also habitual among the peasantry of Ireland.

It is certainly harmless, and argues benevolence of heart. We mean such expressions as the following: "Salvation to me!—May I never do harm!—May I never do an ill turn!—May I never sin!" These are generally used by men who are blameless and peaceable in their lives—simple and well-disposed in their intercourse with the world.

At the head of those Irish imprecations which are dreaded by the people, the Excommunication, of course, holds the first and most formidable place. In the eyes of every man of sense it is as absurd as it is wicked and contemptible; but to the ignorant and superstitious, who look upon it as any thing but a *brutum fulmen*, it is terrible indeed.

Next in order are the curses of pilgrims, mendicants, and idiots. Of those also Paddy entertains a wholesome dread; a circumstance which the pilgrim and mendicant turn with great judgment to their own account. Many a legend and anecdote do such chroniclers relate, when the family, with whom they rest for the night, are all seated around the winter hearth. These are often illustrative of the baneful effects of the poor man's curse. Of course they produce a proper impression; and, accordingly, Paddy avoids offending such persons in any way that might bring him under their displeasure.

A certain class of curses much dreaded in Ireland are those of the widow and the orphan. There is, however, something touching and beautiful in this fear of injuring the sorrowful and unprotected. It is, we are happy to say, a becoming and prominent feature in Paddy's character; for, to do him justice in

his virtues as well as in his vices, we repeat that he cannot be surpassed in his humanity to the lonely widow and her helpless orphans. He will collect a number of his friends, and proceed with them in a body to plant her bit of potato ground, to reap her oats, to draw home her turf, or secure her hay. Nay, he will beguile her of her sorrows with a natural sympathy and delicacy that do him honour: his heart is open to her complaints, and his hand ever extended to assist her.

There is a strange opinion to be found in Ireland upon the subject of curses. The peasantry think that a curse, no matter how uttered, will fall on *something;* but that it depends upon the person against whom it is directed, whether or not it will descend on him. A curse, we have heard them say, will rest for seven years in the air, ready to alight upon the head of the person who provoked the malediction. It hovers over him, like a kite over its prey, watching the moment when he may be abandoned by his guardian angel: if this occurs, it shoots with the rapidity of a meteor on his head, and clings to him in the shape of illness, temptation, or some other calamity.

They think, however, that the blessing of one person may cancel the curse of another; but this opinion does not affect the theory we have just mentioned. When a man experiences an unpleasant accident, they will say, "he has had some poor body's curse;" and, on the contrary, when he narrowly escapes it, they say, "he has had some poor body's blessing."

There is no country in which the phrases of good-will and affection are so strong as in Ireland. The

Irish language actually flows with the milk and honey of love and friendship. Sweet and palatable is it to the other sex, and sweetly can Paddy, with his deluding ways, administer it to them from the top of his mellifluous tongue, as a dove feeds her young, or as a kind mother her babe, shaping with her own pretty mouth every morsel of the delicate viands before it goes into that of the infant. In this manner does Paddy, seated behind a ditch, of a bright Sunday, when he ought to be at Mass, feed up some innocent girl, not with "false music," but with sweet words; for nothing more musical or melting than his brogue ever dissolved a female heart. Indeed, it is of the danger to be apprehended from the melody of his voice, that the admirable and appropriate proverb speaks; for when he addresses his sweetheart, under circumstances that justify suspicion, it is generally said—"Paddy's feedin' her up wid false music."

What language has a phrase equal in beauty and tenderness to *cushla ma chree—the pulse of my heart?* Can it be paralleled in the whole range of all that are, ever were, or ever will be spoken, for music, sweetness, and a knowledge of anatomy? If Paddy is unrivalled at swearing, he fairly throws the world behind him at the blarney. In professing friendship, and making love, give him but a *taste of the native*, and he is a walking honey-comb, that every woman who sees him wishes to have a lick at; and heaven knows, that frequently, at all times, and in all places, does he get himself *licked* on their account.

Another expression of peculiar force is *vick machree*—or, son of my heart. This is not only elegant,

but affectionate, beyond almost any other phrase except the foregoing. It is, in a sense somewhat different from that in which the philosophical poet has used it, a beautiful comment upon the sentiment "of the child's the father of the man," uttered by the great, we might almost say, the glorious, Wordsworth.

We have seen many a youth, on more occasions than one, standing in profound affliction over the dead body of his aged father, exclaiming, "*Ahir, vick machree—vick machree—wuil thu marra wo'um? Wuil thu marra wo'um?* Father, son of my heart, son of my heart, art thou dead from me—art thou dead from me?" An expression, we think, under any circumstances, not to be surpassed in the intensity of domestic affliction which it expresses; but under those alluded to, we consider it altogether elevated in exquisite and poetic beauty above the most powerful symbols of Oriental imagery.

A third phrase peculiar to love and affection, is "*Manim asthee hu*—or, My soul's within you." Every person acquainted with languages knows how much an idiom suffers by a literal translation. How beautiful, then, how tender and powerful, must those short expressions be, uttered, too, with a fervour of manner peculiar to a deeply feeling people, when, even after a literal translation, they carry so much of their tenderness and energy into a language whose genius is cold when compared to the glowing beauty of the Irish.

Mavourneen dheelish, too, is only a short phrase, but coming warm and mellowed from Paddy's lips into the ear of his *colleen dhas*, it is a perfect spell—

a sweet murmur, to which the *lenis susurrus* of the Hybla bees is, with all their honey, jarring discord. How tame is " My sweet darling," its literal translation, compared to its soft and lulling intonations. There is a dissolving, entrancing, beguiling, deluding, flattering, insinuating, coaxing, winning, inveigling, roguish, palavering, come-over-ing, comedhering, consenting, blarneying, killing, willing, charm in it, worth all the philtres that ever the gross knavery of a withered alchymist imposed upon the credulity of those who inhabit the *other* nations of the earth—for we don't read that these shrivelled philtre-mongers ever prospered *in Ireland.*

No, no—let Paddy alone. If he hates intensely, effectually, and *inquestingly*, he loves intensely, comprehensively, and gallantly. To love with power, is a proof of a large soul, and to hate well is, according to the great moralist, a thing in itself to be loved. Ireland is, therefore, through all its sects, parties, and religions, an amicable nation. Their affections are, indeed, so vivid, that they scruple not to kill each other with kindness: and we very much fear, that the march of love and murder will not only keep pace with, but outstrip, the march of intellect.

NOTES.

The Donagh, Vol. I. p. 158.

The story of the Donagh, the Author has reason to believe, was the means of first bringing this curious piece of antiquity into notice. There is little to be added here to what is in the sketch, concerning its influence over the people, and the use of it as a blessed relic, sought for by those who wished to apply a certain test of guilt or innocence to such well-known thieves as scrupled not to perjure themselves on the Bible. For this purpose it was a perfect conscience-trap, the most hardened miscreant never having been known to risk a false oath upon it. Many singular anecdotes are related concerning it.

The Author feels great pleasure in subjoining two very interesting letters upon the subject—one from an accomplished scholar, the Rev. Dr. O'Beirne, master of the distinguished school of Portora at Enniskillen; the other from Sir William Betham, one of the soundest and most learned of our Irish Antiquaries. Both gentlemen differ in their opinion respecting the antiquity of the Donagh; and, as the Author is incompetent to decide between them, he gives their respective letters to the public.

" Stradbrook House, October, 1832.

" DEAR SIR,

" I have read Dr. O'Beirne's important letter on the Dona: the account he has collected of its recent history is full of interest, and for the most part, I have no doubt, correct. His speculations respecting its antiquity I cannot give my adhesion to, not feeling a doubt myself on the subject. When I have time to investigate it fully, I am satisfied that this box, like the others, of which accounts have already been published, will be

found mentioned in the Irish Annals. The inscriptions, however, fully identify the MS. and the box, and show that antiquaries, from the execution of the workmanship and figures on these interesting reliques, often underrate their antiquity—a fault which the world are little inclined to give them credit for, and which they fall into, from an anxiety to err on what they consider the side which is least likely to produce the smile of contempt or the sneer of incredulity, forgetting that it is the sole business of an antiquarian and historian to speak the truth, disregarding even contempt for so doing.

"I had been somewhat lengthy in my description of the Dona, and, from habit, entered into a minute account of all its parts, quite forgetting that you, perhaps, do not possess an appetite for antiquarian detail, and therefore might be better pleased to have a general outline than such a recital. I therefore proceed to give it as briefly as possible, not, however, omitting any material points.

"The Irish word Domnaċ, or Domnach, which is pronounced *Dona*, means the Lord's day, or the first day in the week, sanctified or consecrated to the service of the Lord. It is also in that sense used for a house, church or chapel. *Donaghmore* means the great church or chapel dedicated to God. This box, being holy, as containing the Gospels, and having the crucifix thereon, was dedicated or consecrated to the service of God. Like the Caah, the Meeshach, and Dhimma's box, it is of brass, covered with plates of silver, and resembles the two former in having a box of yew inside, which was the original case of the MS. and became venerated so much, on that account, as to be deemed worthy of being inclosed with it in the shrine made by permission of John O'Carberry, Abbot of Clonmacnois in the 14th century.

"The top of the Dona is divided by a cross, on the lower arm of which is a figure of the Saviour; over his head is a shield, divided *per pale*, between two crystal settings; on the dexter, is a hand holding a scourge or whip of three thongs, and on a chief a ring; on the sinister, on a chief the same charge and three crucifixion nails. In the first compartment, or quarter of the cross, are representations of St. Columbkill, St. Bridget, and St. Patrick. In the second, a bishop pierced with two arrows, and two figures of St. Peter and St. Paul. In the third, the archangel Michael treading on the dragon, and the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus. In the fourth, St. Tigernach handing to his successor, St. Sinellus, the Dona; and a female figure, perhaps Mary Magdalen.

"The front of the Dona is ornamented with three crystal

settings, surmounted by grotesque figures of animals. Between these are four horsemen with swords drawn, in full speed.

"The right hand end has a figure of St. Tigernach, and St. John the Baptist. The left hand end a figure of St. Catherine with her wheel.

"The Dona is nine inches and a half long, seven wide, and not quite four thick.

"So far I have been enabled to describe the Dona from the evidently accurate and well executed drawings you were so good as to present to me. Why the description is less particular than it should have been, I shall take another opportunity of explaining to you.

"There are three inscriptions on the Dona: one on a scroll from the hand of the figure of the Baptist, of ECCE AGNUS DEI. The two others are on plates of silver, but their exact, position on the box is not marked in the drawing, but may be guessed by certain places which the plates exactly fit.

"The first is—

"JOHANNES: OBARRDAN: FABRICAVIT.

"The second—

"JOHS: OKARBRI: COMORBANVS: S. TIGNACII: PMISIT.

"i. e.

"'*John O Barrdan made this box by the permission of John O Carbry, successor of St. Tigernach.*'

"St. Tierny, or St. Tigernach, was third Bishop of Clogher, having succeeded St. Maccartin in the year 506. In the list of bishops, St. Patrick is reckoned the first, and founder of the see. Tigernach died the 4th of April, 548.

"John O'Carbry was abbot of Clones, or Clounish, in the County of Monaghan, and as such was *comorb*, or *corb**—i. e. successor—of Tigernach, who was founder of the abbey and removed the episcopal seat from Clogher to Clounish. Many of the abbots were also bishops of the see. He died in 1353. How long he was abbot does not appear; but the age of the outside covering of the Dona is fixed to the 14th century.

"Since the foregoing was written I have seen the Dona, which was exhibited at the last meeting of the Royal Irish Academy. It has been put together at a guess, but different from the drawing. There is inside O'Barrdan's case, another of silver plates some centuries older, and inside that the yew box, which originally contained the manuscripts, now so united by damp as to

* *All* the successors of the founder saints were called by the Irish, *comorbs*, or *corbs*. The reader will perceive that O'Carbry was a distant but *not* the *immediate*, successor of St. Tigernach.

be apparently inseparable, and nearly illegible; for they have lost the colour of vellum, and are quite black, and very much decayed. The old Irish version of the New Testament is well worthy of being edited; it is, I conceive, the oldest Latin version extant, and varies much from the Vulgate or Jerome's.

"The MS. enclosed in the yew box appears from the two membranes handed me by your friend Mr. ——, to be a copy of the Gospels—at least those membranes were part of the two first membranes of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and, I would say, written in the 5th or 6th century; were probably, the property of St. Tigernach himself, and passed most likely to the abbots of Clounish, his successors, as an heir-loom, until it fell into the hands of the Maguires, the most powerful of the princes of the country now comprising the diocese of Clogher. Dr. O'Beirne's letter I trust you will publish. I feel much indebted to that gentleman for his courteous expressions towards me, and shall be most happy to have the pleasure of being personally known to him.

"You must make allowance for the hasty sketch which is here given. The advanced state of your printing would not allow me time for a more elaborate investigation.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Very sincerely yours,

"W. Betham."

"Portora, Aug. 15, 1832.

"MY DEAR ——,

"It is well you wrote to me about the Dona. Your letter, which reached me this day, has proved that I was mistaken in supposing that the promised drawing was no longer necessary. I had imagined, that as you must have seen the Dona with Mr. Smith, any communication from me on the subject must be superfluous. And now that I have taken up my pen in compliance with your wish, what can I tell you that you have not perhaps conveyed to yourself by ocular inspection, and better than I can detail it?

"I accompanied Mr. S. to Brookborough, and asked very particularly of the old woman, late the possessor of the Dona, what she knew of its history; but she could say nothing about it, only that it had belonged to 'the Lord of Enniskillen.' This was the Fermanagh Maguire, who took an active part in the shocking rebellion of 1641, and was subsequently executed. His castle, the ruins of which are on the grounds of Portora, was stormed during the wars of that miserable time. When I en-

tered on my inquiries for you, I anticipated much in the way of tradition, which, I hoped, might prove amusing at least; but disappointment met me on every hand. The old woman could not even detail distinctly how the Dona had come into her possession: it was brought into her family, she said, by a priest. The country people had imagined wonders relative to the contents of the box. The chief treasure it was supposed to contain was a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair!!!

"After much inquiry, I received the following vague detail from a person in this county; and let me remark, by the by, that though the possession of the Dona was a matter of boast to the Maguires, yet I could not gain the slightest information respecting it from even the most intelligent of the name. But now for the detail:—

"'Donagh O'Hanlon, an inhabitant of the upper part of this county, (Fermanagh,) went, about 600 years ago, (longer than which time, in the opinion of a celebrated antiquary, the kind of engraving on it could not have been made,) on a pious pilgrimage to Rome. His Holiness of the Vatican, whose name has escaped the recollection of the person who gave this information, as a reward for this supererogatory journey, presented him with the Dona. As soon as Donagh returned, the Dona was placed in the monastery of Aughadurcher (now Aughalurcher.) But at the time when Cromwell was in this country, the monastery was destroyed, and this *Ark* of the *Covenant* hid by some of the faithful at a small lake, named Lough Eye, between Lisbellaw and Tempo. It was removed thence when peace was restored, and again placed in some one of the neighbouring chapels when, as before in Aughadurcher, the oaths were administered by the priests with all the superstition that a depraved imagination could invent, as "that their thighs might rot off," "that they might go mad," &c. &c.

"'When Kings James and William made their appearance, it was again concealed in Largy, an old castle at Sir H. Brooke's Deer-park. Father Antony Maguire, a priest of the Romish church, dug it up from under the stairs in this old castle, after the battle of the Boyne, deposited it in a chapel, and it was used as before.

"'After Father Antony's death it fell into the possession of his niece, who took it over to the neighbourhood of Florence-court. But the Maguires were not satisfied that a thing so sacred should depart from the family, and at their request it was brought back.'

"For the confirmation of the former part of this account, the informant refers you to Sir James Ware. I have not Ware's

book, and cannot therefore tell you how much of this story is given by him, or whether any. In my opinion there is nothing detailed by him at all bearing on the subject. The latter part of the story rests, we are told, on tradition.

" As I confess myself not at all versed in Irish antiquities, it may appear somewhat presumptuous in me to venture an opinion respecting this box and its contents, which is, I understand, opposed to that of our spirited and intelligent antiquary, Sir Wm. Betham. I cannot persuade myself that either the box or the contained MSS. were of such an age as he claims for them. And, first, of the box:—

" At present the MSS. are contained in a wooden box: the wood is, I believe, *yew*. It cannot be pronounced, I think, with any certainty, whether the wooden box was originally part of the shrine of the precious MSS. It is very rude in its construction, and has not a top or lid. Indeed it appears to me to have been a coarse botched-up thing to receive the MSS. after the original box, which was made of brass, had fallen to pieces.

" The next thing that presents itself to us is the remnant of a brass box, washed with silver, and rudely ornamented with tracery. The two ends and the front are all that remain of the brass box.

" You may then notice what was evidently an addition of later times, the highly ornamented gilt-silver work, made fast on the remains of the brass box, and the chased compartments, which seem to have formed the top or lid of the box. But, as you have seen the whole, I need not perhaps have troubled you with this description. I shall only direct your attention to the two inscriptions. In the chasing you will see that they are referred to their *supposed* places.

" The upper inscription, when deciphered, is—

" ' Johannes: O'Karbri: Comorbanus: S. Tignacii: Pmisit. For *S. Tignacii* I would conjecture *St. Ignacii*. P, I should conjecture to be *Presbyterus*. On this I should be very glad to have Sir William's opinion. I cannot imagine, if P stands part of a compound with *misit*, what it can mean. I would read and translate it thus—' John O'Carbery, coadjutor, priest, of the order of St. Ignatius, *sent* it.'

" This inscription is on a narrow slip of silver, and is presumed to have formed part of the *under edge* of the *upper part* of the back of the box. The lower inscription is—

' *Johannes O'Barrdan fabricavit.*

" This also is on a slip of silver, and appears to have fitted into a space on the upper surface, which is supposed to have been the top, and to have lain in between the two square com-

partments on the left hand: this is marked in the drawing. I have expressed myself here in the language of doubt, for the box is all in confusion.

"Now, on the inscriptions, I would say, that they indicate to me a date much later than some gentlemen who have seen the box are willing to ascribe to it. In the island of Devenish, in our lake, (Lough Erne,) is an inscription, that was discovered in the ruins (still standing) of a priory, that was built there A. D. 1449. The characters in this inscription are much more remote from the Roman character in use among us than those used in the inscriptions on the box. The letters on the box bespeak a later period, when English cultivation had begun to produce some effect in our island, and the Roman character was winning its way into general use. I shall probably be able to let you see the Devenish inscription, and a *juxta position* of it and the others will satisfy you, I think, on this point. In my opinion, then, the box, with all its ornaments, must have been made at some time since the year 1449. I cannot think it reasonable to suppose that an inscription, containing many letters like the Roman characters, should be more ancient than one not only having fewer letters resembling them, but also having the letters that differ differing essentially.

"Now for the MSS.

"I am deficient in antiquarian lore: this I have already confessed; but perhaps I want also the creative fancy and devoted faith of the genuine antiquary. I cannot, for example, persuade myself, that a MS. written in a clear, uniform, *small* character of the Roman form, could have been written in remote times, when there is reason to think that MSS. were written in uncial characters only, without stops, and with few or no divisions into words, sentences, or paragraphs. The palimprest MS. examined by Dr. Barrett is in uncial characters, and is referred by him to the 6th or 7th century. *Cic. de Republica*, published by Angelo Mai, is assigned to much the same period. Small letters, and the distinctions above mentioned were the invention of later times. I cannot therefore persuade myself that this MS. is of so early an age as some would ascribe to it, though I will not take it upon me to assign the precise time in which it was written. The characters are decidedly and distinctly those now called the Roman: they have not many abbreviations, as far as I could judge, and they are written with much clearness and regularity. They are not the *literæ cursivæ*, or those used in writing for the sake of facility and connexion: they seem rather formed more in imitation of printed letters. SECUNDUM—This imperfect attempt to present one of the

words, will explain my meaning. But I had better not weary you any more with my crude notions. I shall be very glad to hear your opinion, or that of Sir William Betham, to whom I should bow with all the respect due to talent and worth. I must avow my distrust of Irish antiquities; yet, allow me to add, that there is no man more willing to be converted from my heresy, if you would call it so, than

'My dear ——,

"Your friend and servant,

"A. O'BEIRNE

END OF VOL. I.

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